



**Action Plan
for Systematic Quality Improvement
at University College Stockholm
2021 – 2026**

Authors	Decision date	Applicable period	Document
UCS Board of Directors	2021-05-17	2021-06-01 – 2026-12-31	Action plan

Contents

Content

1. Introduction	3
2. Background	4
3. Quality work procedures.....	6
3.1 Student, alumni, doctoral student and employee surveys	6
3.2 The Student union's quality assurance viewpoint	6
3.3 Course evaluations	7
3.4 Programme evaluations	7
3.5 Securing national and local degree objectives	8
3.6 Annual report and business plan.....	8
3.7 Monitoring and evaluation of the quality assurance system.....	9
Annex 1. Overall quality assurance objectives.....	10
Annex 2. The conditions of quality assurance and enhancement	13
Annex 3. Quality systems and quality assurance work	15
Annex 4. External programme review and review of degree objectives	16
Annex 5. UCS organization	19
Annex 6. Periodisering in action plan decided in 2019	22
Annex 7. Assignments, goals, values and strategy, 2021-2025.....	23

1. Introduction

University College Stockholm (UCS) is an independent education provider which is authorised to issue degrees at first cycle, second cycle and third cycle levels according to Law 1993:792. The law states that the education provider is obliged to participate in follow-up activities in order to evaluate the quality of the education, and to draw up a written report on such activities every year. According to the act, the education provided must base this on a scientific approach and on proven experience and it must be conducted in such a way that it otherwise meets the requirements for education in Chapter 1. of the Higher Education Act.¹ The Higher Education Act stipulates:

- that activities are to be ordered so that a high level of quality is achieved in education and research
- the efficient use of available resources to maintain a high quality of operations
- that quality assurance and improvement should be a shared priority for university college staff and students.

UCS's mission is to conduct higher education and research of a high quality, in collaboration with the academy, church and society. An important part of the educational mission is to create professionally relevant educational programmes. Higher education and research play an important role in good societal development. This applies not least to the two subject areas in which UCS conducts education and research: theology/religious studies and human rights. These are areas that are central to our ability to understand the past and the present, as well as contributing to our ability to look towards the future.

All education and other activities which take place at UCS shall be designed and implemented from the viewpoint of six key perspectives:

1. Education and learning should develop the creative, reflective and critical faculties of students and doctoral students.
2. The best possible conditions for students' learning in an internationally oriented scholarly environment
3. Research and education should 'cross-fertilise' each other and benefit civil society
4. Students and doctoral students should have a role in shaping their education and learning environment.
5. A clear stance on gender equality and equal treatment.
6. A social and ecologically sustainable society.

A systematic quality assurance process necessary for the university college to realize its goals and strategic aims.

Quality assurance and improvement covers education at all levels (first, second and third cycles) and is a matter for the entire university college, not just for its management team, but for all staff and students. It is of the utmost importance that the right conditions are established for transparency, and participation in the process and that there is a continual desire for the improvement of all the university college's activities. Quality assurance and improvement must therefore be organized in such a way that it is relevant and effective in achieving all the stated goals and that it is applied throughout the university college as an integral part of the university college's activities at all levels.

¹ This requirement for annual quality reporting has never been requested in the national audits or nine degree reviews UCS experienced in the years 2007-2021, but UCS introduced this with the annual report for 2019.

2. Background

In recent years, UCS has undergone major changes, including a 65% increase in the number of student and the formation of three departments, each with responsibility for budgets, the recruitment and employment of staff and for the development of their own doctoral research programmes. These fundamental changes for the university college have meant that the approach to quality assurance and improvement has had to be reshaped in tandem with these developments.

During the period 2007 to 2021, the university college has been reviewed and tested on nine occasions in connection with its application for the right to awards degrees at different levels, in addition to the various national reviews by, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (UKÄ), which are ongoing. It is doubtful whether there is a higher education institution in the country that has undergone so many UKÄ reviews during the same time period. The effect has been to increase the level of awareness of quality improvement issues throughout the university college. Now this period is over and the university college is entering a consolidation phase, which places new and in some ways different demands on quality improvement activities.

A new quality assessment and improvement programme and action plan was adopted in December 2019, but when this was implemented in the spring semester of 2020, the pandemic affected the entire operation and it became necessary to re-prioritise. As a result, and because the working methods of the various departments have now begun to settle down, it became obvious that there was a need to revise the 2019 action plan.

In particular, a need to simplify and clarify the quality assurance and improvement process was identified, in order to be able to implement the different aspects more easily. In the action plan adopted in 2019, the annual report, together with the review of 21 different areas and activities, became central to the quality assurance and improvement work. However, this action plan did not make a clear distinction between the ongoing quality improvement work and the different levels in the system. There was also no simple and clear tool to ensure the implementation of the development and improvement measures identified in the quality assurance process.

This new quality assurance action plan is based on the ESG standard (Annex 1) as well as on the action plan adopted in 2019. The ongoing quality assurance work focusses on seven different activities. The analysis and presentation of these activities in the activity report is complemented by a link to the annual business plan. Based on the shortcomings and development opportunities identified in the annual report, the business plan becomes the key to implementing development and improvement measures.

Furthermore, the present action plan has made it clear what the ongoing quality assurance procedures should include, with respect to the nature of the overall quality improvement system, where the ongoing quality assurance procedures can also affect the different parts of the overall quality assurance system (Annex 3). An example of this is how this revision of the action plan has resulted in the revision of certain points in the university college's overall strategy for 2019-2020 (Annex 7).

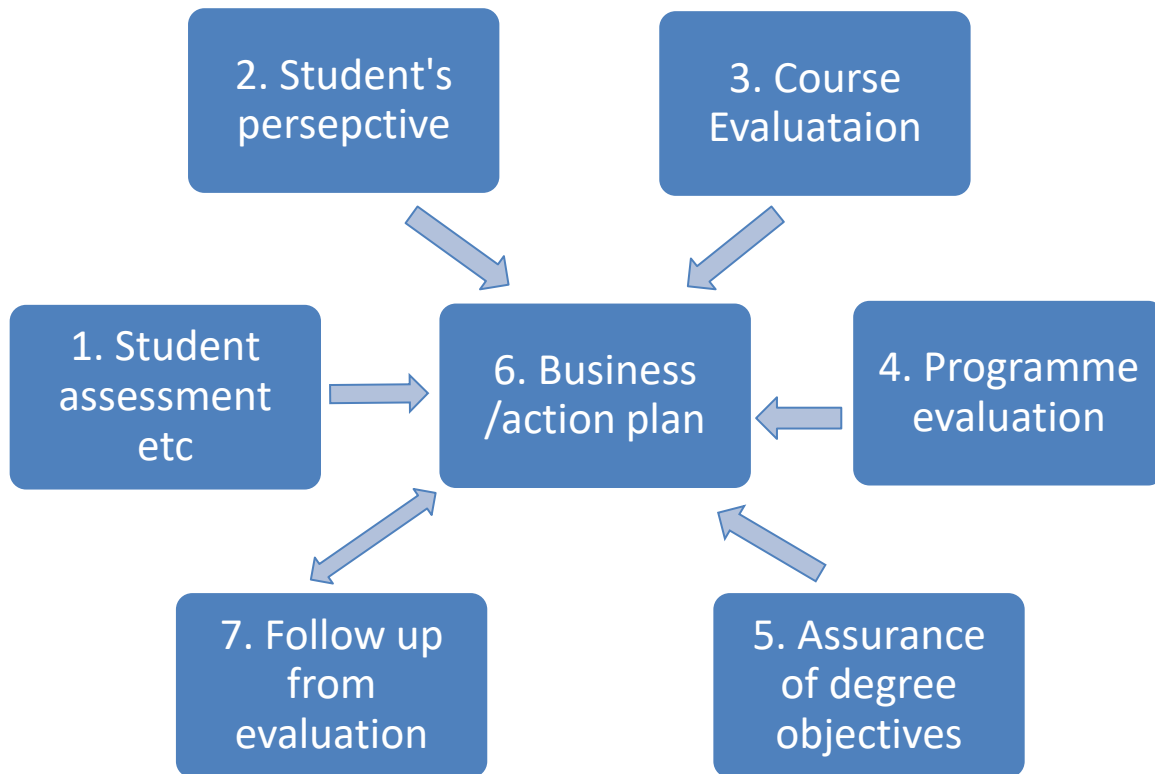
The sharp increase in the number of students and the reorganization of the university college have presented challenges to quality assurance. In these circumstances, it has been crucial that one of the basic prerequisites of quality assurance (Annex 2) i.e. the formation of a highly qualified teachers' collegium and an experienced administration has been put in place ensuring continuity and competence. Of the university college's regular teachers (28), a majority are either professors (7) or

docents (8) and when by the time this action plan is adopted, three of the docents will be in the process of being assessed for promotion to professor and one lecturer for promotion to docent.

The 2019 Action Plan only included UKÄ's audits as an external review of the university college's activities. The new action plan introduces into the UCS quality assurance procedures the involvement of external reviewers in the review of the education programmes (Annex 4). An initial pilot evaluation of this kind will be carried out during the spring semester 2021 and will be completed in August.

Quality assurance procedures have been conducted throughout the years 2019 and 2020 and in order to review what has already happened in the quality assurance work, this action plan is linked to the scheduling decided in the Action Plan for 2019 (Annex 6).

3. Quality work procedures



3.1 Student, alumni, doctoral student and employee surveys

Responsible: President's collegium

Implementation: Communications department

Follow-up & feedback: The President's and each faculty collegium

Scheduling: See below

- The communications department, which is responsible for implementation, prepares the basis for surveys of students, alumni and doctoral students as determined by the president's collegium.
- Student surveys take the form of an annual survey of new students during November, and March alternating each year between doctoral students and students who are in their final year of the bachelor's and master's programmes.
- The annual employee survey takes place during February with the help of external partners. The design of the survey is decided by the president's collegium in collaboration with external partners.
- The surveys are designed to form the basis for monitoring the six key perspectives from which the work of the university college are designed and implemented.
- All surveys shall be commented on in the annual report.

3.2 The Student union's quality assurance viewpoint

Responsible: Student union

Implementation: Student union

Follow-up & feedback: Student union and president's college

Scheduling: Annually

- The student union is represented on the quality council.
- The student union is invited to give feedback on the results of the student surveys, regarding the university college as a whole and of the different departments.
- The student union is requested to provide its comments on the business plan and the quality assurance report in the annual report.
- The university college management is in constant contact with the student union regarding quality assurance and enhancement.

3.3 Course evaluations

Responsible: Course coordinators

Implementation: Course coordinators

Follow-up & Feedback: Each subject collegium

Scheduling: Continuous – upon course completion

- Course evaluations are carried out at all levels in all courses and are continually processed in each subject collegium.
- The course evaluation shall address the content and conditions of the course.
- The course evaluations are designed so that they can form the basis for monitoring the degree to which courses are in line with the six key perspectives. An individual course does not have to be in line with all six key perspectives, but the final course evaluation should make reference to all six.
- The implementation of the course evaluation is decided on by the teacher responsible for the course and students should be given the opportunity to participate in the planning, implementation and follow-up of the evaluation.
- The students' course evaluations, together with the views of teachers, form the overall basis for the course evaluation.
- Students have the right to make their views known anonymously and individual students' views must be de-identified before results are published.
- All teachers and students should be able to take part of the construction of the course evaluations.

3.4 Programme evaluations

Responsible: President's collegium

Implementation: Dean, director of studies and external reviewer

Follow-up & feedback: Dean and director of studies

Scheduling: See below

- Every sixth year, all education programmes must have been reviewed on the basis of all the degree objectives. This can be done step by step over several years or at one time. Everyone involved, students, teachers and other staff should be given the opportunity to make their views known.²
- Those responsible for the education programme decide how the evaluation is to be carried out based on the template in Annex I. Everyone involved has the right to participate in planning, implementation and follow-up.
- Students have the right to make their views known anonymously and individual students' views must be de-identified before results are published.

² See further Annex 4 *External application review*.

- The programme evaluation is designed to be the basis for assessing how well courses reflect the six key perspectives in view of which all the work of the university college should be designed and implemented.
- The review covers those predefined and published rules which cover the student's entire study time, ensuring that they are applied in a consistent manner, i.e. with respect to admission, progression, recognition and the awarding of diplomas.
- Programme evaluation shall be carried out with the help of external reviewers.
- Programme evaluations shall be commented on in the annual report.

3.5 Securing national and local degree objectives

Responsible: Dean and director of studies

Implementation: Director of studies and faculty collegium

Follow-up & feedback: Director of studies faculty collegium

Scheduling: See below

- To ensure that courses are designed in such a way that students can achieve the stated learning objectives. To ensure that the resulting degree conforms to the objectives for that programme, that this is clearly communicated and that it conforms to the correct level within the national reference framework for degrees.
- A matrix is established for each degree showing how the learning objectives of the courses correspond to the national and local degree objectives, including how progression requirements are covered by the courses which make up the degree programme.
- Teaching and examination are designed to ensure that the student has achieved the necessary course objectives when passing the course. This is ensured with the syllabus and follow-up in course evaluation, cf. 3 above. For securing degree objectives, see also 4, 6, 7 and 8.
- The bachelor's or master thesis is of particular importance to ensure that a student has achieved the requirements for a degree, see 6 below.
- The matrix for securing degree objectives is reviewed and processed annually and commented on in the annual report.
- Each degree shall be assessed at least once every sixth years.³
- A matrix for degree objectives is established for each doctoral student and is included in the individual study plan to make visible how the local and national goals are being met in the doctoral programme. The individual study plan is updated at least once a year.
- When defending the thesis, the opponent and the examining committee must critically review the thesis and the respondent's defence based on the national degree objectives.

3.6 Annual report and business plan

Responsibility: President

Implementation: Deans and directors of studies, quality council

Follow-up & feedback: President's Collegium, quality council, university college board

Scheduling: Every spring semester

- The university college's annual report and business plan shall include a section that analyses, monitors and initiates the development of educational programme and doctoral programme subjects, based on the previous year's quality assurance and enhancement.
- The quality council meets before work begins on the annual report and business plan for analysis of the previous year and to propose measures to be taken in the coming year.
- The analysis is based on:

³ Timetabling decided by the President's collegium 2021-06-24, cf. appendix 4.

- Student, alumni, doctoral and employee evaluations
 - The student union's representations on quality assurance
 - Course evaluations
 - Application evaluations
 - Ensuring national and local degree objectives
 - The previous year's annual report and business plan
 - Statistics, such as throughput
 - Relevant UKÄ evaluations of other higher education institutions
- The analysis shall include an assessment of how well the six key perspectives which determine how all the university college's work should be designed and implemented, are reflected in the university college's educational programmes.
 - The analysis shall describe which quality-improving measures need to be in focus in the coming year, both in terms of educational programmes and how departments and administration support, organise and contribute to quality improvement.

3.7 Monitoring and evaluation of the quality assurance system

Responsibility: The president's collegium and each faculty collegium

Implementation: UKÄ, each faculty collegium

Follow-up & feedback: The president's collegium and each faculty collegium, quality council, university college board

Scheduling: Every spring semester, UKÄ reviews see UKÄ's timetable

- The university college's quality assurance system undergoes external review through UKÄ's thematic review of education evaluations, as well as reviews of the university college's quality assurance procedures. The process for these evaluations can be found in UKÄ's guides.
- The quality council meets after the work on the annual report and business plan are completed, and has been dealt with in the president's college and the university college's board of directors,
 - to monitor and evaluate whether the quality assurance work has been carried out and has been an effective and in line with the university college's quality assurance system;
 - and re-evaluate and propose changes at system level.
- Individual employees and students, each collegium and the student union are entitled to present proposals for changes at system level in the quality council.
- The president's collegium decides on changes at the system level.

Annex 1. Overall quality assurance objectives

UCS quality work is based on "Part 1. Standards and Guidance for Internal Quality Assurance" in *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*.⁴ Paragraphs 1 to 10 are taken from *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*, "Annex: Summary list of standards."

1. Quality assurance policy

Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

Comment: The UCS quality assurance system involves all staff and students and includes education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including the research programmes. The system supports both quality assurance and quality development and is an important tool for shaping and developing all of the university college's work. UCS's quality assurance system is published on the university college's website.

2. Design and establishment of training

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the framework for qualifications of the European higher education area.

Comment: Each subject and faculty collegium is responsible for the development and phasing out of courses and education programmes. The president's collegium decides on the establishment of new programmes. The seven quality assurance procedures ensure that the learning and degree objectives of the programmes can be met by the students.

3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Comment: The student union is represented in all subject and each faculty collegium, as well as in councils, boards and the university college's board of directors. In this way, students have the opportunity to influence the planning, implementation and follow-up of educational programmes, as well as in the formation of learning processes and the forms of examination. The student union is invited to provide feedback on student evaluations, as well as to provide suggestions and comments on business plans and the quality report in the annual report.

4. Admission of students, progression, recognition and award of degrees.

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

⁴ <https://www.uka.se/download/18.2b5bddd71593fab953bdc5ff/1487841879254/ESG-svensk-oversattning.pdf>

Comment: Our degrees are reviewed to ensure that the learning outcomes of the courses correspond to the national and local intended outcomes, including how progression requirements are covered by the courses within each degree. Teaching and examination are designed to ensure that the students who pass each course have achieved the necessary learning outcomes. Programme evaluations are designed to form the basis for monitoring the extent to which the six key perspectives which shape the design and implementation of all the university college's work are reflected in the degree objectives. The review also ensures that predefined and published rules that cover the student's study time are applied in a consistent manner.

5. Teaching staff

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

Comment: When appointing teachers, these appointments are always advertised and reviewed by one or more external experts as are internal promotions to associate professor or professor. All teachers have the opportunity to seek space for development and research activities within their employment. An educational development plan contributes to the continuous training of all teachers, with the focus on pedagogical development.

6. Learning resources and student support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

Comment: The study situation and the environment are continuously monitored through, for example, student surveys and dialogue with the student union. UCS prioritizes identifying students with special needs and providing extra pedagogical support for them. In a writing workshop, everyone is offered the opportunity to get help with developing their academic writing skills. The university college has made a major investment and equipped all classrooms with IT equipment that enables both hybrid teaching and seminar activities with participants from all over the world. These resources also enable courses and educational programmes to be made more accessible to students living at a distance from higher education institutions and universities.

7. Handling of information

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities

Comment: Through the seven recurring quality assurance procedures in UCS, information is collected from students and staff, analyzed in the annual report and transmitted to the business plan with proposals for the development and improvement of the work of the university college.

8. Information to the public

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

Comment: The course catalogue is continuously updated to make the information about courses and educational programmes as clear, accurate and easily accessible as possible. The annual report is published on UCS's website.

9. Continuous follow-up and regular review of training courses

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead

to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

Comment: The programme assessments carried out through the external review procedures ensure that students achieve set goals and that the education is promoted and shaped according to the six key perspectives which shape the design and implementation of all the university college's work. Courses are followed up through course evaluations. Self-evaluation is carried out in the form of an matrix/report where all courses at all levels of the programme that examine the selected degree objectives are listed, as well as which course objectives are explicitly affected. At doctoral level, this is followed up by the individual study plan and through the procedures that apply to the dissertation.

10. Regular external quality assurance

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Comment: UCS works systematically with the assessments and feedback included in UKÄ's national quality assurance system. In addition, there is the university college's own review of educational programmes that is carried out with the help of an external review.

Quality work activities	ESG standard	Scheduling
1. Student, alumni, doctoral & employee surveys	3, 5, 6, 9	Annually
2. The Student Union's quality points of view	3, 6, 9	Annually
3. Course valuations	3, 6, 9	Continuously
4. Application evaluations	4, 6, 9, 10	At least every 6 years
5. Securing national and local degree objectives	4, 2, 9	At least every 4 years
6. Activity report and business plan	2, 7, 8, 9	Annually
7. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality system	1, 7	Annually

Annex 2. The conditions of quality assurance and enhancement

1. Staff

Quality in education and research is not something that is created primarily through documents and organization. Quality is a culture nurtured by people, a human capacity to aspire to and be able to achieve specific goals. It is about values, attitudes and skills that are transferred from one person to another. This is a tradition with deep roots in history, such as the rabbi or zen master with his disciples, or the craftsman with his apprentices and journeymen where it was about being schooled in a certain tradition or in a specific craft for several years. Academic excellence cannot be secured by special organization or excellent documentation. Finally, it is always about teachers, researchers and administrative staff who work to high standards, and endeavor to build an environment where excellent education and research take place.

Having said that, it is of the utmost importance for UCS to recruit highly skilled teachers who are both qualified researchers and educators, as well as able administrative staff who can work cooperatively with others. It is also vital that teachers are given the conditions to develop professionally both as researchers and educators. There should be fair and transparent processes for recruitment and professional development of the staff. Another crucial prerequisite for successful quality assurance is an active student voice.

In principle, all the teachers at the university college should have doctorates. All teachers have the right to devote time to research as part of their employment: a lecturer/docent 25%, associate professor 36%, professor 40%. With external research grants, the proportion of research to teaching can be significantly increased, but the university college's guidelines are that each teacher should give at the least 20% of their time to teaching, in part because it is essential to maintain a close link between education and research. At UCS, there is also a belief that teaching and research are mutually enriching

An essential part of the work to create a good learning environment is about creating the right environment for the development of teachers' pedagogical skills. Teachers are part of a continuous long-term common pedagogical development programme and are encouraged to develop their own pedagogical portfolio. The common pedagogical programme includes issues such as supervision at different levels, assessment and examination, equal treatment, field study methodology, presentation techniques, online pedagogy, etc. Within a three to four-year cycle, all teachers are given the opportunity to receive individual supervision in communication with professional voice teachers. Pedagogical training also includes a continuous update on how students with a disability can be given suitable support. (See further *Policy and action programme for higher education pedagogical development*.)

For administrative staff, funds are allocated annually for training and skills development and are offered through both national and international collaboration for library and administration staff.

2. Learning environment

In order to ensure a good learning environment, it is important to assess how the available resources can be utilised in the most effective way. This applies, for example, to the number and spacing of lectures, the work of those who organise support for students with special learning needs, a writing workshop and other forms of student support and educational resources.

A good psycho-social work environment based on continual work on issues such as equal treatment, gender equality and sustainability is a prerequisite for quality assurance to be developed in a trusting collaboration that includes everyone at the university college: board, students, teachers, researchers, administration and leadership team. Successful quality assurance work also requires that UCS works in a creative, national and international context which offers both challenge and incentive to development.

3. Organization

UCS quality assurance procedures should be transparent and ensure that weaknesses and shortcomings are recognised and taken into account by students, teachers and the university college's management. This requires that quality assurance procedures are structured and goal-related, and that evaluations are documented and carried out regularly and methodically in accordance with a long-term action plan.

The documentation is important for the results of evaluations to be included in planning and decision making about the future. Although this deals with different subject areas and different levels, a scientific approach means that there are common criteria. At the same time, not least because of differences between students such as in language capabilities, continual work is required on how, for example, relevant assessments of students' performance can be carried out.

The prerequisites for quality assurance and enhancement include well-thought-out structures for monitoring key areas in the preparation of new courses and training programmes. It is not only about ensuring subject progression and quality, but also about ensuring that aspects related to equal treatment, gender equality and sustainability are made clear in course content and course literature.

Annex 3. Quality systems and quality assurance work

The systematic quality assurance and enhancement work at UCS can be described in terms of a *quality system* together with the quality assurance *procedures* carried out at the university college.

1. *Quality system*

A quality system is a formal framework aimed at controlling the work of securing and developing quality. This includes, for example, vision and strategy, goals, the action plan based on the six key perspectives, and processes that are documented, accessible and used in the business plan.

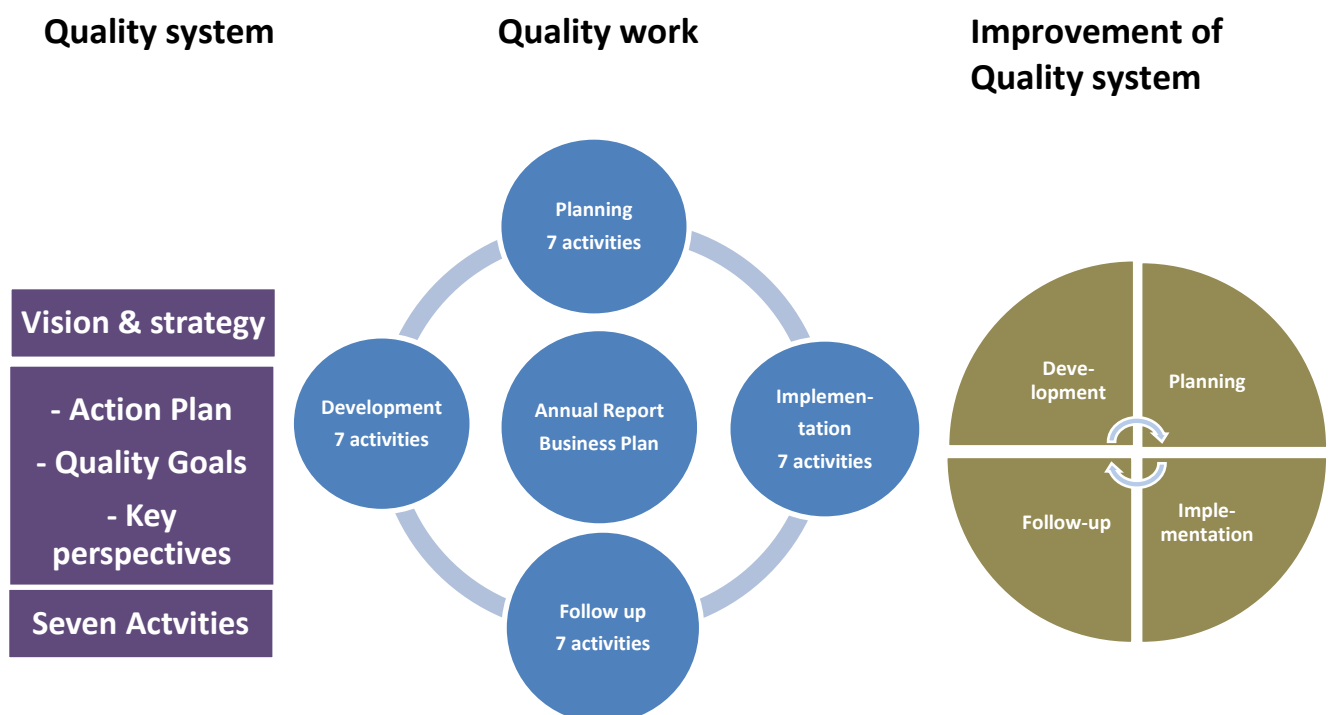
2. *Quality assurance procedures*

Quality assurance work is what the university college does to monitor and evaluate the quality of education – *quality assurance* – and what it does to identify and implement improvements – *quality improvement*. Education here means education at all levels including at doctoral level.

3. *Components of systematic quality work*

The left side of the figure below illustrates the quality assurance system at UCS. It takes its starting point in the university college's vision and strategy and includes the action plan with quality assurance objectives for education at all three educational cycles, as well as the six key perspectives which shape the design and implementation of all the university college's work. The hub of this quality assurance work consists of the seven quality assurance procedures that are analyzed and reported on in the annual report. This analysis and accounting results in various measures that are included in the university college's business plan. Where necessary, the quality assurance system can be further developed and improved, which means that one or more parts of the quality assurance system may need to be revised.

The systematic quality assurance work at UCS



Annex 4. External programme review and review of degree objectives

External application review

1. *Decisions concerning programme evaluation*

See below 7. *Timetabling of the external programme review and review of degree objectives.*

2. *Review of national and local degree objectives*

- The dean decides, after consultation with each faculty collegium, the director of studies and student union, on at least one national degree objective to be reviewed.
- On behalf of the university college, external reviewers decide at least one national degree objective.
- At the end of every six years, an education programme must have been examined on the basis of all of its degree objectives. This can either be done in stages or all at once.

3. *Review of the six key perspectives*

All of UCS's work shall be designed and implemented from six key perspectives:

1. Learning that develops the creative, reflective and critical abilities of students and doctoral students
2. The best conditions for students' learning in an internationally oriented, scholarly environment
3. Research and education should cross-fertilise each other and benefit civil society
4. The influence of students and doctoral students on the educational environment
5. Gender equality and equal treatment
6. Contribution to a social and ecologically sustainable society.

The external examiner shall assess the extent to which the defined degree objectives in the programme are implemented.

4. *Admission and diploma*

The review assesses whether predefined and published rules are applied in a consistent manner, i.e. with regard to admission, progression, recognition and issuance of diplomas.

5. *Basis for external assessment*

Self-evaluation consists of a matrix/report where all courses at all levels of the programme that examine the selected degree objectives are listed, as well as which course objectives are explicitly affected. The self-assessment shall also include information on the number of students and throughput. A list is produced of the teachers for the programme and their status (those with doctoral degrees / associate professors / professors). This self-assessment must be provided by the end of February.

Five student contributions from that programme, approved in the previous year, must be randomly selected, anonymised, and be submitted by the end of February.

Site visits, in the form of interviews (alternatively via Zoom) are conducted with the following groups, during April:

- a. 3-4 students from different semesters of the programme, at least one of these selected by the student union
- b. 3-4 alumni from the programme
- c. 3-4 teachers from the programme
- d. 23 representatives of work life
- e. Interview with the programme director together with the dean of the department that provides that programme.

At least four courses are selected by external reviewers based on self-assessment. The reviewer announces which these courses are within one week of self-assessment. The institution shall then provide external reviewers with the following documentation for the selected courses as soon as possible:

- a. current syllabuses with literature lists
- b. course guides, i.e. where the course is described for the students with schedule etc., through access to the respective course information on the university college's web platform
- c. course evaluations for the last two completed courses
- d. examples of two examinations from two different course sessions and any existing assessment documents given to the students at the time of the examination
- e. student numbers and throughput for the course on the last two occasions when the course has been held.

6. Debriefing

The external review shall culminate in a written report, which must be submitted digitally by the end of August. The results are communicated approximately one week before this to the programme director and dean for their information and to provide the opportunity to correct any factual errors. The report is then submitted to the president. The results of the review shall be made available to staff, the student union and to the university college management. The decision about who else is entitled to see the review is made by the institution.

The external review report shall, in accordance with the usual review practice:

- a) identify deficiencies that need to be addressed urgently for the sake of future intakes
- b) identify development areas that should be addressed
- c) highlight examples of good practice
- d) make recommendations.

7. Timetabling of the external programme review and review of degree objectives⁵

Scheduling of the external review of UCS's education programme and review of degree objectives:

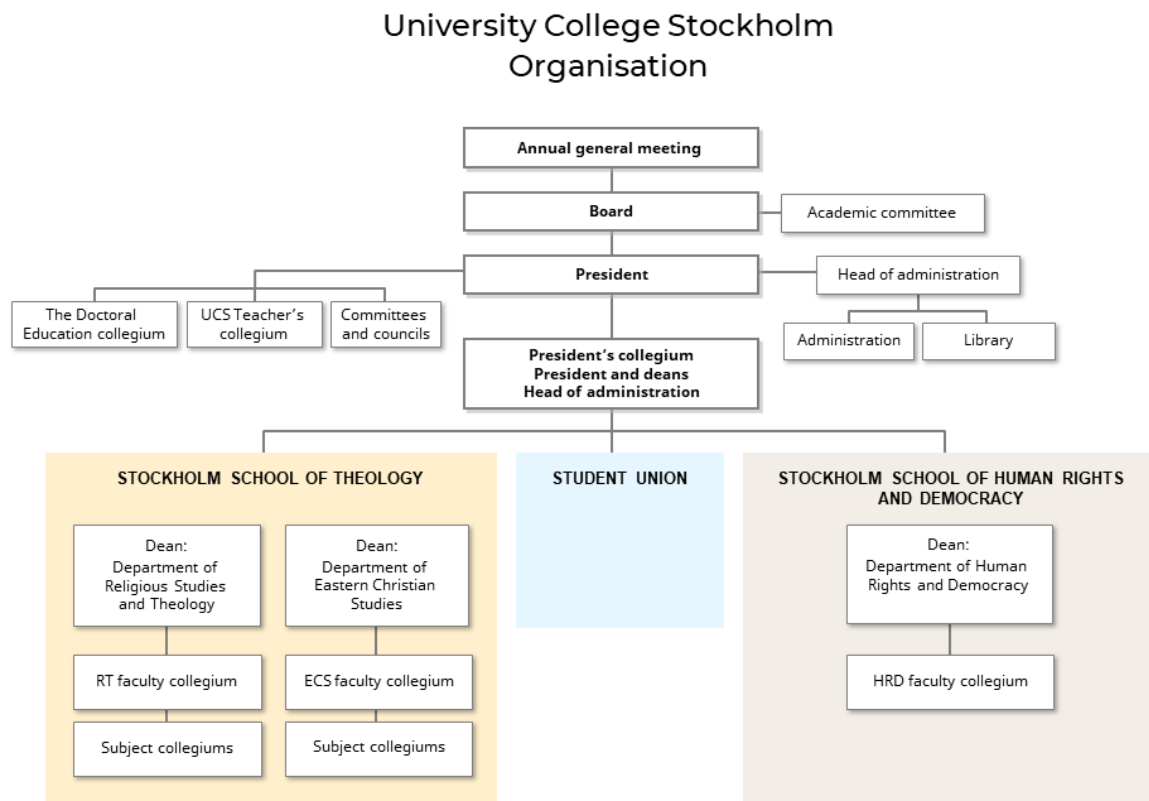
2021: Bachelor's degree in theology
2022: Bachelor's degree in Human Rights
2023: Masters's degree in Eastern Christian Studies
2024: Master's degree in theology
2025: Master's degree in Human Rights

⁵ Timetabling decided by the President's collegium 2021-06-24.

2026: Master's degree in Eastern Christian Studies

Annex 5. UCS organization

The overall organisation of UCS can be found in the following organisational chart.



The president's collegium, consisting of the president and the three deans, constitutes the university college's operational management team and is responsible for establishing new subjects at all levels as well as preparing and following up the budget and business plan. Furthermore, the president's collegium is responsible for establishing the principles and steering documents for teaching and research of overriding importance for the whole institution. The president, in collaboration with the president's collegium, monitors the institution's interests in relation to the government and parliament and other stakeholders of crucial importance for the university college's development.

The quality council consists of the president, the deans, a director of studies from each department, a teacher representative for each department, the chief librarian and representatives of the student union.

A subject collegium includes all the teachers within that subject as well as a student representative. The chairperson of the collegium should be the subject coordinator. The subject collegium is responsible for designing course plans and study plans at both basic and advanced levels. For each subject, there is a postgraduate research collegium which is led by that subject's research director.

The MRD faculty collegium includes everyone involved in teaching in the department with the addition of student representatives. While the MRD faculty remains at the current level of tenured teachers, it combines the mission and function of subject collegium and faculty collegium. The faculty collegium makes the final decisions regarding, for example, education plans, syllabuses, strategies for collaboration with external partners, recruitment, pedagogical development, and principles for grading, as well as determining the activities that will apply during the academic year, in accordance with the instructions of the board of directors and the president's collegium. The chairman of the collegium is the dean and the secretary is the director of studies. The director of studies has a special responsibility for quality assurance in the development, for example in the development of course and education plans, as well as ensuring that decisions are enforced and followed up.

The Department of Religious Studies and Theology Faculty Collegium includes everyone involved in teaching at the department with the addition of student representatives. The faculty collegium makes the final decisions regarding, for example, education plans, syllabuses, strategies for collaboration with external partners, recruitment, pedagogical development, and principles for grading, as well as determining the activities that will apply during the academic year, in accordance with the instructions of the board of directors and the president's collegium. The chairman of the collegium is the dean and the secretary is the director of studies. The director of studies has a special responsibility for quality assurance, for example in the development of course and education plans, as well as ensuring that decisions are enforced and followed up.

The Department of Eastern Christian Studies Faculty Collegium includes everyone involved in teaching at the department, with the addition of student representatives. The faculty collegium makes the final decisions regarding, for example, education plans, syllabuses, about strategies for collaboration with external partners, recruitment, pedagogical development, and principles for grading, as well as determining the activities that will apply during the academic year, in accordance with the instructions of the board of directors and the president's collegium. The chairman of the collegium is the dean and the secretary is the director of studies. The director of studies has a special responsibility for quality assurance, for example, in the development of course and education plans, as well as ensuring that decisions are enforced and followed up.

The Teachers' Collegium, which includes all UCS-employed teachers, as well those belonging to affiliated departments, deals with pedagogical development issues, provides a forum for the presentation and discussion of teachers' research, discusses quality and strategy issues and others area of common concern.

A postgraduate research collegium consisting of the research director and a docent from each postgraduate subject⁶, the president, a doctoral student representative and the director of studies with responsibility for postgraduate education. The collegium is responsible for quality assurance and for the development and follow-up of postgraduate education at the university. The postgraduate research collegium is responsible for the admission of new doctoral students and approves the preparation and revisions of individual study plans. The postgraduate research collegium meets at least twice per semester.

The Academic Committee ensures that the performance of all permanent teachers is objectively assessed, and that posts are filled in such a way as to ensure gender quality, equal treatment and diversity. In addition, it has responsibility for the professional development of teaching staff. The board also handles applications for promotion to docent or professor. In these matters, the board submits documentation and proposals for decisions to the university college's board of directors. The

⁶ The postgraduate research collegium in Eastern Christian Studies is represented for the time being by a professor and deputy dean.

board decides who is appointed as an external reviewer.

The Council for Equal Treatment, which consists of the president, a teacher representative from each department and a student union representative, has to ensure that concrete measures are implemented in teaching and research, in the physical work environment and psycho-social study environment, in the recruitment and admission processes, in grades and examination, to ensure a good and inclusive working environment for students and staff.

The disciplinary committee, consisting of the president, deputy deans, a representative of the student union and - to combat discrimination - the equal opportunities council, deals with cases where students are suspected of cheating or plagiarism, requiring disciplinary action possible leading to the suspension of offenders. Students can appeal the disciplinary committee's decision to the EHS board, which has the right to appoint an appeals committee to handle the matter. The disciplinary committee has to ensure that equal treatment is applied in all cases.

The Student Union consists of the university college's students who have joined the student union. The student union elects the board of directors once a year. Representatives of the student union sit on each collegium (with the exception of the UCS collegium) the quality council, the council for equal treatment and the academic committee. The President of the student union is an adjunct member of the university college's board of directors.

Annex 6. Periodisering in action plan decided in 2019

Schedule of quality assurance review	ESG standard university regulation (HL)	Years					
		2 0 1 9	2 0 2 0	2 0 2 1	2 0 2 2	2 0 2 3	2 0 2 4
Alumni, student and doctoral student survey	1.3		X				X
Admission, credit transfers	1.4	X				X	
Library's learning resources	1.6		X			X	
Sustainability & equal treatment perspective in education	HI		X			X	
Internal and external information management	1.7,8			X			X
Internationalisation in education	HI			X			X
Course plans	1.3	X	X	X	X	X	X
The course evaluation process	1.3	X			X		
Quality assurance policy and action plan	1.1,9					X	
Employee survey	1.5,7			X			
Pedagogical development programme	1.6	X			X		
Collaboration with workplace and wider society	1.1,2,9			X			
Student and doctoral student input	1.3,4 HL	X			X		
Student support, learning resources	1.3		X				X
Governance and organization	1.2,5,6	X				X	
UKÄ quality assurance review	1.10			X	X		
UKÄ thematic evaluation	1.10	X		X		X	
Professional & research links	HI			X	X		X
Education plans	1.2			X			X
Degree certificate	1.4		X			X	
Complaints, reporting procedure	1.3,4		X			X	

Annex 7. Assignments, goals, values and strategy, 2021-2025

After taking stock of the risks, challenges and opportunities faced by UCS and following discussions in The Teachers' Collegium, talks with UCS' owners, the student union and the board, the board has adopted this document to establish UCS' goals and core values and strategy for 2021-2025.

By setting out a school-wide set of values, common goals and an overall strategy, the board wants to create conditions for a common identity and platform from which to operate, as well as the conditions for being able to affirm the distinctive identities of the various branches of our work.

The intention is to more effectively manage what has been already established and to continue to develop education, research, collaborations and the organization in accordance with the mission given to us by our owners. As this is the university's first document of this kind, both its form and contents must be evaluated and one of the responsibilities of the university's new management is to propose the necessary adjustments that may be needed during this strategy period.

UCS' two schools, Stockholm School of Theology and the School of Human Rights and Democracy, as well as the department of administration and other support mechanisms, begin from the task set by the principal and then adopt their own more specific and concrete goals and business plans based on this strategy and the 2020-2023 directive from the Uniting Church of Sweden.

UCS aims to work on the basis of the following values:⁷

- *Meaningful **Existence** for everyone*
- ***Sustainability** of humanity and the world*
- ***Collaboration** of the academy, Church and society*

Assignments and goals

UCS' education and research must promote a sustainable society with awareness of the national and global issues that are the prerequisites for life on earth and for democratic societies where human rights are respected.

UCS wants to be a leading research and educational institution within its focus areas of theology and human rights and democracy. Research and education must be based on scholarship and proven experience and be relevant to academia, the Church and society. UCS wants to contribute to increased knowledge in society, promote critical thinking, analysis and dialogue and meet individual, national and global needs and challenges. UCS also wants to be a meeting place for ecumenical dialogue and collaboration between different Church traditions.

UCS has, according to its directive from the Uniting Church of Sweden, the task of contributing to higher education in Sweden from the perspective of its foundation in the peoples' movement.

⁷ In Swedish *Existens, Hållbarhet, Samverkan* – UCS.

It is also part of UCS' mission to continuously examine the needs and conditions for expanding the school's educational and research roles, and to positively test opportunities to develop the work in different directions. This is important for strengthening UCS' position and for its continuing role as a strong provider of education and training within its focus areas. The owner (the Uniting Church of Sweden) views positively the fact that UCS collaborates with different actors in different areas.

When it comes to theological education and pastoral service, UCS must provide accredited courses in theology for everyone, regardless of personal beliefs, background, or personal opinion on theological issues. For those training to be pastors and priests, insights into the human condition and existential issues as well as practical skills must be communicated in a way that equips them for their future professional calling.

Through the human rights programs, UCS should provide the tools and knowledge to be able to analyze the meaning of rights, their background and function for the individual and for society. The education should provide competence to work in international bodies, state administration, business, Swedish and international voluntary organizations, public education, research and journalism.

Research at UCS should be of an international standard and aim to maintain the quality of education, contribute to the development of competence within UCS' core areas of education and ensure the identification and development of future teachers. The research should also make a contribution to the advance of society and to deepening international contact networks and commitment.

Background

EHS has its roots in the 19th century revival movement, part of the peoples' movement that contributed to transforming Sweden into a democratic, welfare society. Central to the movement was the struggle for the dignity and equal value of all people including freedom of religion and expression and three-quarters of a century before universal suffrage was introduced in Sweden, democratic participation was a matter of course in the revival churches. There was also an awareness of the need for education and the first two seminaries for pastoral education were founded as early as 1866.

As a consequence of the higher education reforms in 1993, the two seminaries of the Baptist Union and the Mission Covenant Church merged to form the Stockholm School of Theology (THS), which the Methodist Church also became part of in 2008. The new school was a necessary response to the sharp expansion of higher education during the second half of the 20th century, in which a large number of previously non-academic education programs had been converted into university level programs. More and more of the country's inhabitants, as well as members of the parishes, had a university education and the pastors risked falling behind in terms of education and knowledge. In comparison with, for example, the priests in the Church of Sweden and in the Catholic Church, respectively, for whom their academic studies formed the basis of their training, many felt that the standard of pastoral education needed to be raised.

But the pastoral seminaries were too small to create dynamic student environments and the teachers' competence was inadequate. At a time when ecumenism, not least at the local level, took shape in new parish formations, these seminaries were increasingly perceived as remnants of a bygone era. The pastoral seminaries were to a large extent closed environments, which in the long

run meant that the congregations also risked becoming closed environments which could not reach out with their message. It was also difficult for the pastors to continue their studies, as their education was not fully approved at the university level. A state-recognized school would also allow for government grants to help the denomination financially. Higher education and research would provide new tools for the church's own understanding of the contemporary situation and future developments, and be able to participate in a better way in public debate and broader educational activities.

Its foundation in such an ecumenical vision made THS attractive at an early age for, among others, the training of future priests within the Church of Sweden, but many others also came to apply to the new school and it was a Catholic who was the first to receive a bachelor's degree in theology. Many students have testified that the ecumenical climate at the school has contributed strongly to an attractive study environment. It has created the conditions for both a better understanding of others' perspectives and a deeper insight into the uniqueness of each student's own tradition.

It was on the basis of this ecumenical vision, that it seemed natural, in 2016, to establish the Eastern Church educational program for future priests and parish educators within the Orthodox churches, in association with Sankt Ignatios.

The struggle for religion and freedom of speech was also a common denominator with the Orthodox churches in Sweden. In 1617, Orthodox services were permitted, the first time a Church congregation other than the Swedish Church had been allowed to practice, but they were not allowed to start their own education.

The legacy of the revival movements' struggle for freedom of religion and expression and the dignity and equal value of all people, also meant that the school, after only a few years, took a new step and in 1997 initiated an educational program in human rights. THS thus became a pioneer in launching the first interdisciplinary higher education program in human rights and democracy. The initial one-year education program has been gradually expanded and today includes complete bachelor's and master's programs, with the ambition of starting its own doctoral program in the field in the near future.

Values

The values UCS stands for are:

- equal value and equal treatment of all people
- democracy, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and other fundamental human rights
- education, training, and research
- democratic leadership and a respect in debate and conversation
- sustainable development of society with reduced impact on the environment
- that people's beliefs, convictions, commitments, and faith communities are respected and understood as an asset.

UCS must be an inclusive organization where everyone, regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, religious beliefs and outlook on life, sexual orientation, political opinion or physical or mental disability, must feel welcome and respected. Equal opportunity and diversity are the basic principles for all the school's activities.

All activities at UCS must be permeated by a striving for high quality and relevance. Research and education must be based on proven experience, and follow an ethical and scientific approach where curiosity and commitment, compassion and humor, critical and creative thinking, and an

unconditional commitment to the search for knowledge as well as academic freedom are fundamental elements.

The teaching and research at UCS should be integrated so that the education can meet changing situations, the needs of society and scholarly progress. The organization and management structure must be designed so that they contribute in the best way to ensuring the quality and further appropriate development of UCS' work.

Based on their position, all employees and students have a responsibility to contribute to a good environment in accordance with the university's values. This includes striving for high quality and relevance, contributing to an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome and respected, and counteracting all forms of harassment.

Some important external factors

The world is facing major global and local challenges in achieving sustainable development. UCS education and research can help meet these challenges and at the same time be influenced by both global and national trends.

We live in a time when both human rights and democracy are being questioned in various ways and the living conditions of people are being challenged. In many parts of the world, the space for civil society organizations is shrinking and academic freedom is threatened.

Trends such as globalization and digitalization create opportunities but also challenges.

Agenda 2030 and the global goals for sustainable development are ambitious and based on the cooperation of governments, the private sector, civil society and citizens. The vision in the agenda and the concrete goals are thus also important for UCS.

At a time when information is disseminated rapidly and there is increasing skepticism about expert opinion and the findings of science and scholarship, greater demands are placed on citizens' ability to evaluate and critically examine statements.

Digitization can simplify, add value and contribute to inclusion and individual solutions, but it can also create obstacles and alienation. The pandemic has provided valuable experience here.

Sweden is a multicultural and multi-religious society, where, on the one hand, religion is becoming increasingly visible, while in some contexts religious communities are marginalized. Religion as a value-mediating force and religious language as an asset in existential conversations are part of the public debate. To meet the range of different societal challenges, the ability to understand, interpret and analyze the contemporary debate is needed.

In Sweden, there is an ecumenical climate. Each of the church families represented in Sweden has a different relationship to the majority society, depending on their history in Sweden and their membership structure. They also face different challenges with regard to the recruitment of pastors / priests and other leaders within their congregations.

There is an expansion of the scope of education and research both nationally and internationally.

The number of both permanent and occasional educational places will increase in 2021 in Sweden.

However, the expansion will not take place evenly across all sectors. Above all, an investment will be made in those professions in which the government considers there is a shortage of qualified personnel, for example, data and IT, but also in training and education that can support health care, school or social care.

In the last twenty years, the number of applicants to University in Sweden has increased by around 60%, while the number of applicants to religious studies and theology has halved.

Strategy

UCS has many strengths to safeguard. An undergraduate education that meets students' expectations and has a high proportion of first-time applicants, research in different areas that is of high quality and creates interest both nationally and internationally and a culture characterized by academic collegiality, where decisions are made as far as possible in consensus and colleagues review and encourage each other's academic work.

Looking five years ahead, there are a number development areas that should be in focus. In all of these, education and research should be held together and these should characterize UCS' work in each of its core areas of theology, human rights and democracy. Research and education must maintain a high scholarly quality and be relevant to academia, the church and society.

A common and entrenched identity

- The ambition of increased collaboration and integration between the Department of Religious Studies and Theology and the Department of Eastern Christian Studies within THS, as well working towards a closer and more creative relationship between THS and the Department of Human Rights and Democracy leading to a cross fertilization of ideas.
- A clear plan for communication to both strengthen UCS' identity and to make it known to its various target groups. We seek to clarify our brand strategy and set goals for how the university wants to be perceived among potential students, present students and alumni.

Education and research

- High quality, through a committed teaching staff with high level of competence and a culture that is characterized by an open and creative climate where people from diverse backgrounds and experiences meet, develop professionally and collaborate together. In addition routines for quality assurance must be in place.
- Define educational and research areas where cutting-edge competence must be preserved, developed or supplemented. Strive for both an interdisciplinary profile as well as academic specialization. Continue to develop leadership education relevant to the university's students and users.
- Create rich environments where education and research can be conducted within UCS' profile areas. Secure the establishment of the research seminars within UCS and develop a doctoral program in human rights and democracy.
- To ensure high quality, relevance and academic integrity, both individual researchers and the departments must widen their international networks and strive for an internationalization of research.
- Ensure an organization that creates the conditions for a good balance between undergraduate and postgraduate education.
- Strive for a broader recruitment so that it better reflects the population in terms of ethnic background and gender.

- Ensure incentives for pastoral students to study for postgraduate qualifications.
- Together with our partners, develop UCS' provision of continuing education for people active in churches and other organizations.
- Ensure the broad competence that exists within UCS in terms of sustainability with a focus on gender, climate, disability, existential health and human rights and democracy in general.
- Provide a high value to the role of the teacher and the quality of the teaching.
- Pedagogy, course content and their own learning process will equip students and doctoral students to meet new challenges. Continue to develop distance education and at the same time ensure a high-quality campus education.

Contributions to church and society

- Work to ensure that the university's research and the college's competence are also utilized outside the academy, in the Church and in the wider society. This includes making our work more visible.
- Continue to strengthen the university's voice to the outside world in public debate and in wider issues.
- Demonstrate the relevance of theology also outside academia and the Church.

Relations

- UCS is wholly owned by the Uniting Church and there is an ongoing dialogue between the university and the church to clarify which issues should be decided by the owner, what the expectations of the school are and over which areas the university should have independent control. The university enjoys a great deal of independence to operate within the framework of the church's ownership directive. There is also dialogue with the Uniting Church concerning, among other matters, pastoral education, continuing education of the church's employees and the ways research is funded.
- The university's development has taken place in collaboration with several partners nationally and internationally, and both in terms of research and education it is of great importance to continue to nurture existing relationships and build new ones with academic institutions and networks, nationally and internationally. This means that the parties involved should clarify their respective expectations of collaboration.
- Future employers of the university's students are, in several cases, significant partners for whom, the education of their priests and pastors is being shaped at the university. Through the Eastern Church education programs, the university has gained several partners among the Orthodox churches as well as the Sankt Ignatios foundation. The many priest candidates from the Church of Sweden who are educated at UCS also make the Church of Sweden an important partner. Relationships with important future employers for students should also be developed with regard to human rights and democracy. In all collaborations, UCS' independence should be safeguarded.
- The college model allows for new forms of collaboration with folkhögskolor within the Uniting Church family that should be developed and continuously evaluated.
- Try to develop training and research in new areas through collaboration with other agents – one such area could be health.
- UCS also has natural partners in civil society. The collaboration with Diakonia is an example of this.
- UCS has several different research funders, including the Uniting Church of Sweden. It is important to ensure long term funding stability by identifying the most important funding providers and developing good relations with them while at the same time ensuring sufficient freedom. It is also important to systematically seek competitive project funding.
- Important international partnerships and networks must be developed.

Attractive academic environment

- Take advantage of the individual nature of the school and its smaller size to increase flexibility, and creativity and to try new paths.
- Build on well-developed leadership structures for collegial collaboration.
- Ensure a functioning student influence at all levels and encourage students to make the most of the university's opportunities beyond their studies.
- An expansion of Campus Bromma is required to create conditions for a good educational and research environment, as well as to ensure the integration of education and research between the various departments.

Appropriate administration, efficient use of resources and a balanced economy

- Continue to develop in order to create rich and productive environments within each of the university's profile areas.
- Continue to work for increased government grants for both undergraduate education and research so that individual education providers such as UCS are not disadvantaged in relation to government owned universities and university colleges.
- Secure funding for UCS in general and the doctoral program in particular by linking more external funding providers to UCS and continuously working for new donations and grants for the school's activities.
- Strengthen and develop the administrative organization.