



The purpose and the idea behind quality assurance in higher education - The Norwegian perspective

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How the Norwegian national quality system aligns itself with European thinking behind quality assurance

- **How the system around QA of higher education has developed**
- **Internal and external QA**
- **Requirements for HEI's systematic QA**
- **Standards and criteria for doctoral degree programmes**



The Norwegian Quality Reform 2002 and 2003

Main objectives

More organizational and decisional autonomy to higher education institutions (“institutional autonomy”)

Increased goal-oriented steering (“steering at a distance”)



Background

Massification of higher education

Growing number of actors and stakeholders in higher education

Growing political and societal expectations for higher education, both nationally and on European level



Legal framework

- Act relating to universities and university colleges
- Ministerial Regulations concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education
- NOKUT's Academic Supervisions Regulations

The purpose of NOKUT's activity is to monitor the quality of higher education [...] promote quality development that ensures a high international level in the education provided by the institutions

Regulating NOKUT's accreditation and supervision activities, institutions' QA

Standards for doctor degree programmes

Requirements for the institutions' systematic quality assurance and criteria for programmes and institutions

The Higher Education Sector

2003

4 Universities

5 Specialised universities

27 University colleges

HEI with accredited programmes

Registered students: 206 050

Registered doctoral degree agreement: 4 476

Completed doctoral degree: 723

2022

10 Universities

9 Specialised universities

13 University colleges

HEI with accredited programmes

Registered students: 304 067 (2021)

Registered doctoral degree agreement: 11 572 (2020)

Completed doctoral degree: 1601 (2021)



European trends and developments in higher education and their relevance for quality assurance

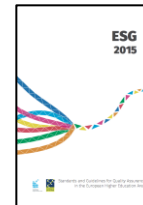
- Harmonization of European higher education
 - *Bologna process*
 - *Stimulation of inter-European collaboration*



- Supranational stakeholder organizations
 - The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
 - The European University Association (EUA)
 - The European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
 - The European Students Union (ESU)



The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)



The responsibility of the institutions

The Norwegian model

The universities and university colleges are themselves responsible for the quality of the educations they offer, and they are required to have a system to **ensure and further develop** the quality of their educations.



Quality assurance as a governance tool to ensure **trust** and **accountability**



Internal quality assurance

- Assuring educational quality at study program level
- Conducted by the higher education institutions and academic peers



External quality assurance

- Assuring conditions for educational quality at institutional and systemic level
- Conducted by public authorities and academic peers

Periodic reviews of quality assurance practices in higher education



History



2004

QA systems are required by law



2003-11

First cycle of evaluations (76 institutions)



2009-16

Second cycle of evaluations (62 institutions)



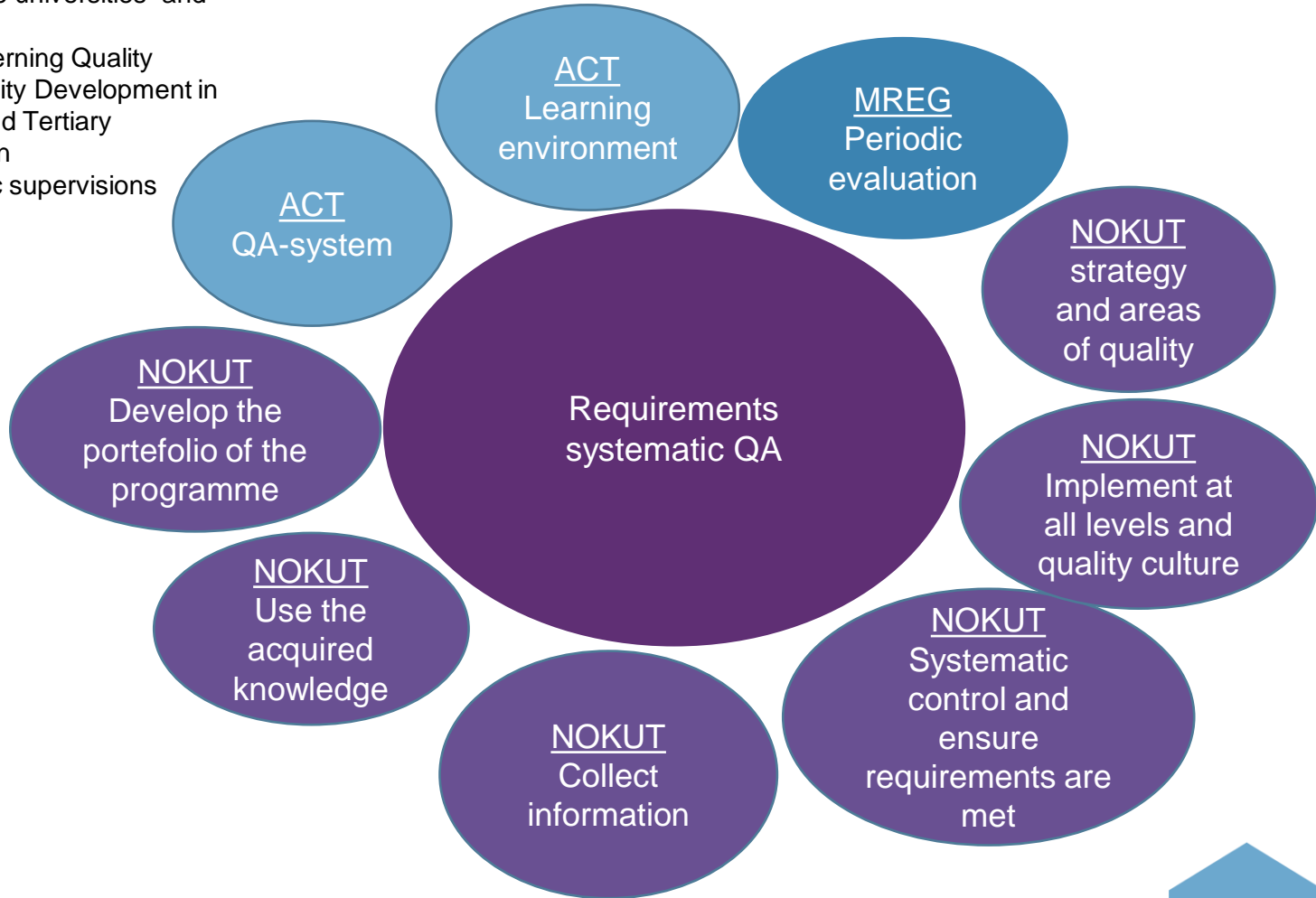
2017-24

Cyclic QA audits (45 institutions)

ACT = Act relating to universities and university colleges

MREG = Reg. concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education

NOKUT = Academic supervisions regulation

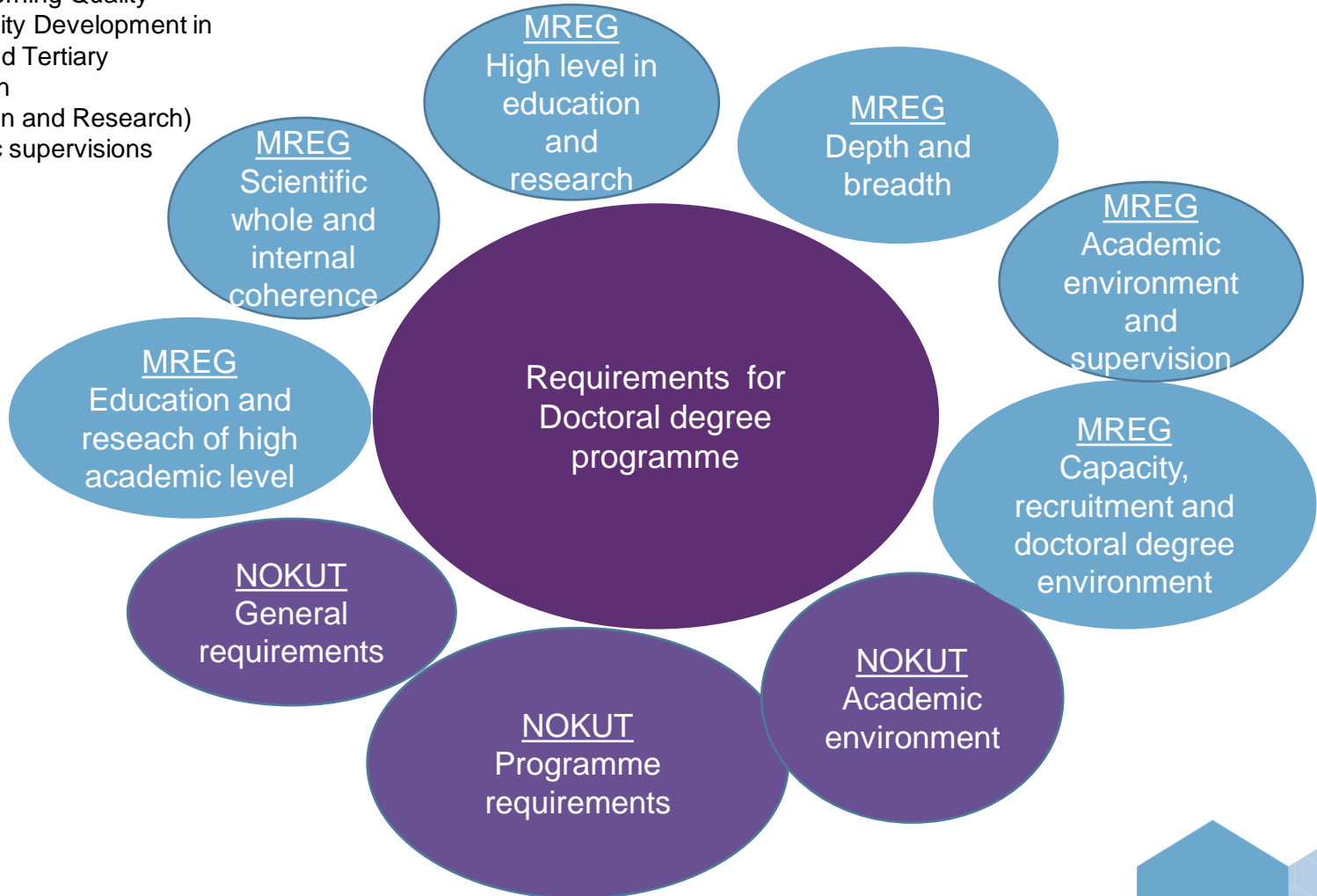


NOKUT's Academic Supervisions Regulations

Section 4-1 Requirements for systematic quality assurance

- (1) Quality assurance practices must be set out in a strategy and cover all areas of importance to the quality of the students' learning outcomes.
- (2) Quality assurance practices must be implemented at all levels of the institutions' management. Through their QA practices, institutions must promote a quality culture among staff and students.
- (3) Institutions must systematically ensure that all study programmes meet the requirements set out in national laws and regulations, including any additional regulations stipulated by the institutions themselves.**
- (4) Institutions must systematically collect information from relevant sources in order to assess the quality of all study programmes.
- (5) Knowledge obtained through quality assurance practices must be used to enhance the quality of the institutions' study programmes and uncover instances of deficient quality. Deficient quality must be rectified within a reasonable time.
- (6) Results derived from quality assurance practices form part of the knowledge base used in assessing and developing the institution's overall portfolio of study programmes.

MREG = Reg. concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education (Ministry of Education and Research)
NOKUT = Academic supervisions regulation



NOKUT
General
requirements

- PhD regulation

NOKUT
Programme
requirements

- Learning outcomes
- Content, structure and infrastructure
- Internationalisation
- Teaching, learning, assessment and active role in the learning process
- Links to research/artistic research and academic development work

Work load

NOKUT
Academic
environment

- Competence, composition, stability and size
- Quantitative requirements
- Educational competence (including supervision)
- Research/artistic research and academic development work
- Participation in national, international partnership and networks
- Leadership, QA and development

Does the Norwegian system align with European thinking behind quality assurance?

On the general system level

The doctoral degree programmes

Consequences and impact of the system

Way forward





NOKUT

