



Háskólinn
á Akureyri
University
of Akureyri



ANNUAL
QUALITY REPORT

MAY
2025


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LIST OF ACRONYMS

DQHR	Director of Quality and Human Resources
CTL	Center of Teaching and Learning and IT
IWR	Institution-Wide Review
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
QEF3	Quality Enhancement Framework 3
UNAK	University of Akureyri





This annual report describes progress made since the 2024 Annual Quality Report. The report also includes an overview of the main quality activities undertaken by the University of Akureyri during the previous school year and a schedule for upcoming activities during the next school year.

1. INTRODUCTION

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Over the past two years, the university has been in discussions with Bifröst University regarding a potential merger. While such a merger presents significant opportunities, particularly for students in Iceland, it also brings considerable challenges. These include securing financial support from the Ministry of Culture, Innovation and Higher Education. Both universities have established steering committees and appointed a project manager to support the process. The process includes consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including student bodies at both institutions and the goal is to reach a recommendation on whether to proceed with the merger for December 2025.

Approximately a year ago, mould was discovered in part of the university's facilities, resulting in significant disruption to operations. Staff had to be relocated to temporary workspaces — some of them off-campus and equipment and other items required thorough cleaning and decontamination. Now, a year later, it has become clear that the remediation measures taken by the building's owners were insufficient, and mould has reappeared. This is a major challenge that places considerable strain on both staff and university leadership. At this time, it is still unknown for how long the relocation of staff from the affected facilities will be necessary.



2. PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS IWR

All areas for improvement highlighted in the last IWR have now been addressed and the focus is now on implementation, monitoring progress, and refining actions as needed. Below is a summary of progress thus far.

STRATEGY

UNAK has recently approved a new strategy for 2025-2030. Key focus areas of the new strategy are Artificial Intelligence (AI), innovation and expanding our doctoral programme. One of UNAK's current priorities is improving alignment between strategic goals and quality processes. To support this, strategic considerations are now being integrated into quality processes such as the annual monitoring reports submitted by faculties. Recently Heads of Faculty and the Deans had a workshop to discuss how best to integrate implementation of the Strategy.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In January a Project Manager for AI was appointed to a new two-year position. His primary responsibility being to lead the implementation and development of AI across the university, with a particular focus on education, consultation, and strategic planning related to this transformative technology. Since then, things have developed rapidly and in May a two-year agreement with Scite, one of the most powerful modern tools for research and citation was signed. Scite leverages artificial intelligence to analyse sources, provide contextual insights, and promote transparency in scientific work. Through this agreement, all university staff and students have full access to Scite under the institution's Enterprise license.

The Project Manager for AI at the university, notes that making Scite available to everyone at the University of Akureyri not only enhances research and critical thinking but also provides a meaningful opportunity to adapt learning and teaching to the rapidly evolving landscape shaped by AI.



INNOVATION

In January a project manager for Entrepreneurship and Innovation was hired. The role of the project manager is to work closely with the local innovation centre Drift EA which the University of Akureyri has formalized a partnership with as well as working with other parties in innovation. The University has already hosted several events related to innovation and invention.

In collaboration with various partners, the university has taken part in organizing idea sprints — intensive workshops designed to foster creativity and drive innovation. Idea sprints offer powerful learning experiences, encouraging participants to engage in problem-solving under pressure through interdisciplinary collaboration, adopt new technologies, and strengthen their presentation and communication skills. These events play a key role in nurturing a culture of innovation across academic and professional fields.

EXPANDING THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

UNAK received authorization for doctoral studies in the Faculties of Education and Psychology by the Ministry of Culture, Innovation and Higher Education in February. Securing this accreditation is a crucial part of expanding our doctoral programmes and now with the new strategy in place as well the intention is to have specific Ph.D. student positions



funded by UNAK in place during the next school year. Further enhancements based on accreditation review findings are in progress and are followed up on in a yearly meeting between the Doctoral council and the DQHR.

THE HOW OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Implementation of guidelines across all levels is progressing smoothly. The guidelines are embedded into the induction process for new employees. Current staff have access to a Self-assessment tool based on the guidelines which they can use to identify professional development opportunities. This has also been used by some Heads of Faculty in staff development interviews.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING

Guidelines for on-site study sessions have shown significant results with greater satisfaction from students. A segment from an on-site study session in the Police Science programme was featured on television this

spring semester, showcasing how courses from both the practical and theoretical components were creatively integrated to provide students with a realistic assignment.

STUDENT COMMUNITY IN FLEXIBLE LEARNING

A new position, Project Manager for Student Engagement, was established during the current academic year, and the former president of UNAK's student union has been appointed to the role. Students have actively contributed to shaping this position in collaboration with university leadership. As part of the implementation of UNAK's new Equality Strategy, the role now includes responsibilities related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). This involves gathering and communicating well-founded feedback from students on DEI-related issues that may create barriers to access or participation.

The aim is for the Project Manager to act as a vital link between students and university leadership, ensuring

that student voices are heard and that decisions reflect real student experiences.

PROGRAMME OVERSIGHT

The original intention was to appoint a Programme Director for each study programme, with responsibility for the organisation and oversight of programmes within the respective schools. All Programme Directors were to have a unified job description. However, due to the complexity and diversity of study programmes across faculties, it was decided to take a different approach to this recommendation from the IWR. The focus has now shifted to developing a structured project for programme oversight. At the beginning of the next academic year, each faculty will be required to appoint a person responsible for programme oversight for each programme. In the autumn, the DQHR will host a start-up meeting for all appointed individuals, where the project will be introduced, and a support and collaboration network will be established.

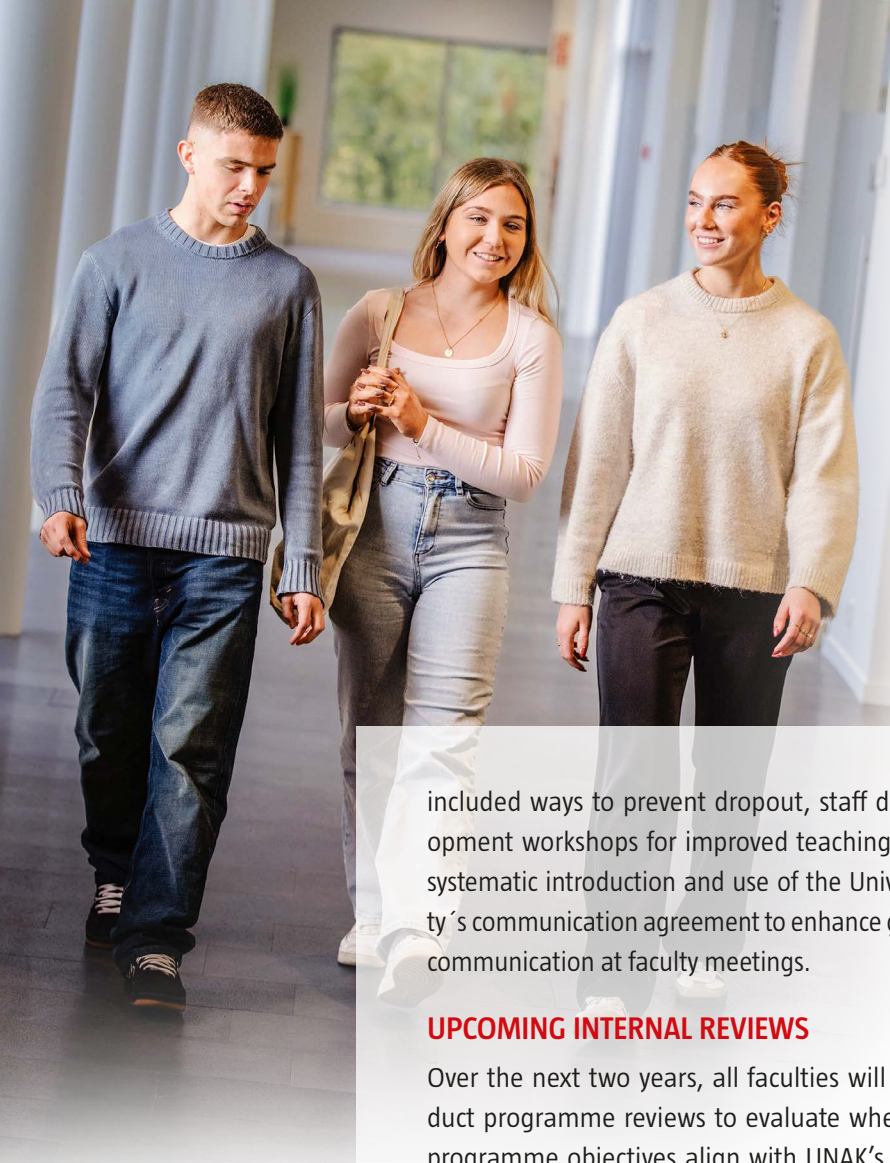
3. INTERNAL QUALITY REVIEWS

In terms of internal quality assurance, the university has focused on developing a robust process for the annual quality monitoring of faculties. This has led to quality activities becoming integral to daily routines with further use of accessible data dashboards.

Systematic annual monitoring is helping faculties build strong foundations for future quality reviews and strengthen the university's quality culture. This approach is human centred and practical with ongoing support and training during the school year. The Head of Faculty has a monthly meeting with a Project Manager from the Quality and HR team to review the process, provide training, and offer feedback.

THEMES FROM ANNUAL MONITORING REPORTS

Themes emerging from the annual reports include challenges related to stress and workload, as well as an increase in dissatisfaction with salaries. On a more positive note, faculties generally report an increase in student applications, a growing number of faculty members participating in staff development interviews, and a rise in research output as measured by the Icelandic points system. At the beginning of the school year there is a full day meeting with the academic leadership, the Rector, Pro Rector, Deans and Head of Faculties. Before the meeting the Deans and DQHR have selected examples of good practice from the faculties which are presented and discussed at the meeting. This year examples of good practice



included ways to prevent dropout, staff development workshops for improved teaching and systematic introduction and use of the University's communication agreement to enhance good communication at faculty meetings.

UPCOMING INTERNAL REVIEWS

Over the next two years, all faculties will conduct programme reviews to evaluate whether programme objectives align with UNAK's strategic goals and societal needs. As part of these reviews external benchmarking will be incorporated. The preparation will start next year with focus on finding appropriate university abroad for

benchmarking as well as choosing a method for benchmarking.

Based on this annual monitoring process for faculties similar process will be implemented for support services next school year. A crucial part of that is for each unit to choose KPI's and to make sure the support services are operating in alignment with the new UNAK strategy.

INTERNAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

Over the past three years, efforts have been ongoing to strengthen research support services. This includes assistance with grant applications, research funding opportunities, statistical analysis, and other forms of academic support. In the upcoming academic year, a survey will be distributed to all academic staff to assess satisfaction with existing services and to establish key metrics for future development.

Discussions have also been underway regarding the measurement of research impact. In this

context, the effectiveness statements from the QEF Handbook have served as a valuable starting point for initiating structured conversations on this topic.

STUDENT INITIATIVES

Students have been, and continue to be, key contributors to quality enhancement at the university. Student representatives on the University Quality Council actively engage in discussions and have initiated several quality-related projects. One such initiative is a project on digital accessibility, which began during the current academic year and is set to be completed in the coming year. As part of this work, examples of good practice in Canvas course setup have been identified within each faculty, alongside an analysis of courses where improvements are needed. The goal is to achieve a more standardized and student-friendly Canvas experience across faculties.



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