



Quality framework concept

1 Introduction

The ZHAW and its staff and students regularly reflect on, review and improve their actions. They do so both independently and with the help of their peers. The ZHAW uses the results of its quality review to report on the quality of its actions to the Zurich University of Applied Sciences Council, its staff and students, the public and its partners. It cultivates discourse on quality and reflects upon and improves its governance, services and resources.

Two documents are central to the quality work of the Schools, the President's Office (R), Finance and Services (F&S), the Executive Board (HSL) and the University Conference (HSV), which represents all staff and students of the ZHAW: this quality framework concept and the concept for the informed peer review procedure.

2 Objectives

The quality work conducted at the ZHAW helps it to

- implement its strategic goals and general quality requirements and monitor its progress in achieving these goals,
- maintain and expand its position as a broad-based university,
- ensure that a university-wide quality culture is established in the sense of a learning organisation and quality awareness is at the heart of the actions of all stakeholders and
- fulfil its legal mandate with respect to quality assurance and development and meet the standards for the accreditation of universities in accordance with the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HEdA).

3 Principles

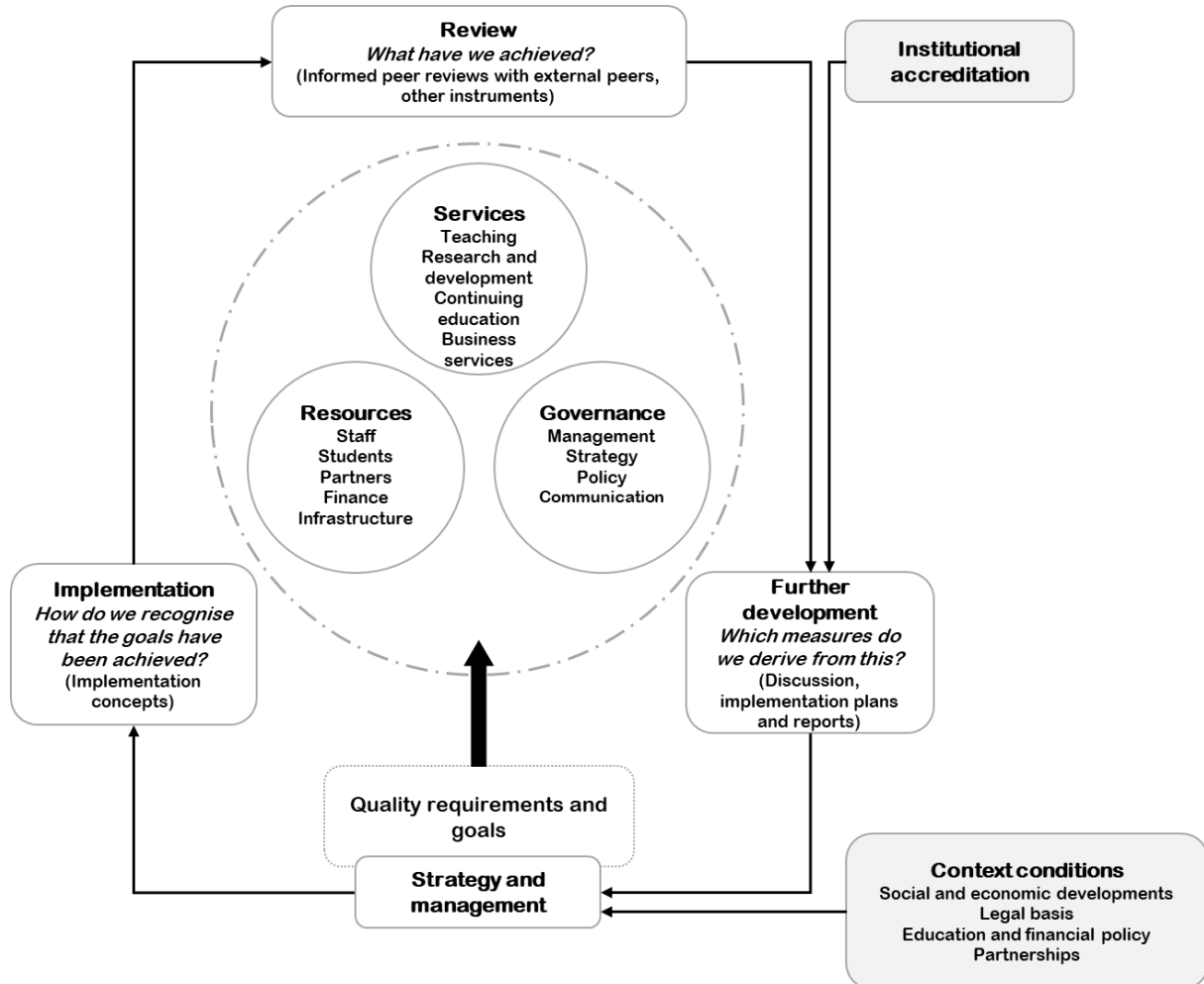
To ensure and develop quality in the long term,

- the ZHAW has formulated general quality standards that guide its actions,
- the ZHAW sets itself concise general strategic goals (in the form of its university strategy and other strategies) based on social, economic, educational and financial policy conditions as well as legal requirements and overarching guidelines,
- the Schools/F&S/R and the HSL/HSV – building on the strategic foundations – set themselves coordinated specific strategic goals (in the form of School and, where applicable, institute and department strategies and functional strategies), which take into account professional, educational, social theory and disciplinary findings as well as the needs and requirements of both internal and external stakeholders
- decisions at the ZHAW are, wherever possible, based on evidence (informed), which is made available in a university information system in various cockpits or by the [strategic observatory](#),
- the ZHAW and its Schools develop and validate their offering in the areas of teaching and continuing education (collectively referred to as “education”), research and business services on a theoretically and empirically sound basis and in dialogue with internal and external peers and stakeholders and
- the Schools/F&S/R and the HSL strive to actively secure the necessary resources and the required organisational conditions.

In particular, the Schools/F&S/R and the HSL/HSV develop and promote instruments that strengthen mutual support, internal peer consultation and problem and error analysis, thus supporting and fostering a quality culture that is befitting of a university.

4 Process

The entire quality work process is organised as follows:



The quality work process at the ZHAW ensures that

- the Schools/F&S/R and the HSL/HSV define how they will recognise that their goals have been achieved and the quality requirements have been met,
- the Schools/F&S/R and the HSL/HSV define qualitative and quantitative indicators on this basis, measure these indicators and thus review the achievement of their respective goals, allowing them to reflect upon whether their actions and the financial and structural conditions are appropriate and thus to derive corresponding measures where necessary and
- there are continuous exchanges at the ZHAW with respect to successful practice and experiences of quality work at a university-wide level as well as in and between the Schools/F&S/R and HSL/HSV, thus allowing for strong links that foster the strengthening and utilisation of synergies.

The Schools/F&S/R and the HSL/HSV ensure that the instruments used

- comply with current evaluation standards and social science methods,
- include both self-evaluation and feedback from external peers and stakeholders in the case of larger projects,
- pursues clear goals,
- serve to optimise the object of evaluation and
- generate added value and have a lasting positive impact.

The Schools are free to have themselves and their programmes evaluated, certified or accredited by external bodies. The results of such procedures can be taken into account in the binding informed peer review procedure, but do not replace it.

5 Elements

The process for quality work outlined above includes the following two essential elements:

- Implementation concepts for quality work: with their implementation concepts, the Schools/F&S/R and the HSL/HSV of the ZHAW define how they organise their quality work. In these concepts, they lay down the regularity with which and the way in which they operationalise their quality requirements and goals as well as how they monitor their achievement and derive any necessary measures on this basis. Where necessary, they also define which areas, in addition to the general quality requirements, they review on a continuous basis with respect to their quality independently of the set targets and how they organise this review.
- Informed peer review procedure: the Schools/F&S/R and the HSL/HSV evaluate themselves and reflect on their performance, governance and resources at least once every seven years as part of an informed peer review in which external peers take on the role of critical friends. This process is based on a review and outlook and aims to further the development of the respective unit or body.

6 Responsibilities

The Zurich University of Applied Sciences Council is responsible for monitoring the ZHAW's quality assurance and development system.

The Executive Board is responsible for quality assurance and development. It supports quality assurance and development by providing suitable conditions, committees and instruments. The committees include bodies with advisory and preparatory functions in which all Schools and, where necessary, other units and bodies are represented. The implementation concepts for quality work of the Schools/F&S/R and the HSL/HSV are available to the Executive Board.

The President approves the implementation concepts for quality work of the Schools/F&S/R and the HSL/HSV and is also informed at regular intervals about the progress of implementation. The informed peer review procedures are commissioned by the President, who approves the procedure concept as well as the procedure reports and planned measures.

The Quality Commission regularly exchanges experiences related to quality work and acts as an advisory and preparatory body in matters of quality development for the Executive Board. It also takes on a coordinating role in the institutional accreditation process. All Schools as well as the President's Office, Finance and Services and the University Conference are represented in the Quality Commission. Alias (ZHAW's official student body), as well as the Research and Development Unit, the Education Unit, the International Affairs Unit and the Diversity Unit are permanent guests without voting rights.

The Head of Quality Development manages and coordinates the activities of the Quality Commission and represents the ZHAW in various external committees in matters relating to quality. They are also responsible for the implementation of institutional accreditation.

The responsibilities and powers with respect to the quality assurance and development measures to be taken in the Schools/F&S/R and the HSL/HSV correspond to the other powers bestowed upon the bodies and units of the ZHAW.

7 Document information

The original German version of the regulations can be found here: [Rahmenkonzept Qualität](#)

Subject	Content
Document	Quality framework concept
Issued by	Head of Quality Development
Decided by	Executive Board
Approved by	The Zurich University of Applied Sciences Council
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Appendix: General quality requirements

Governance

1. Quality assurance and development as well as university guidance are based on strategic principles and goals as well as on current and relevant qualitative and quantitative information.
2. Employees and students are adequately involved in fundamental issues relating to university development.
3. Equal opportunities, equality and diversity are consistently promoted for all employees and students.
4. The quality framework concept and current results gleaned from the quality assurance processes are communicated to employees and students on an ongoing basis.
5. The ZHAW regularly publishes objective information about its activities and the study programmes and qualifications that it offers.

Services

6. The educational programmes and business services are scientifically sound, forward-looking, practice-oriented and meet professional standards.
7. Scientific integrity in research is guaranteed at all times.
8. Education, research and business services are closely interlinked with each other and the world of practice in terms of their content, personnel and structure.
9. Education, research and business services have an impact in the respective specialist areas and professions and both enrich and promote the development of society and the economy.
10. Education, research and business services are consistent with the requirements of the European Higher Education Area.
11. Conditions for admission to the respective study programmes and the assessments are defined, communicated and applied in a systematic, transparent and consistent manner.

Resources

12. Employees act and cooperate in a constructive, reflective and goal-oriented manner and take their ethical responsibility seriously. They support the link between the worlds of science and practice in the areas education, research and business services directly and/or indirectly through their work and are open to both interdisciplinary and interprofessional approaches.
13. Employees are encouraged to further develop their skills and expertise and are supported in their career development. The qualifications of employees are evaluated on a regular basis.
14. Students develop into individuals who are ready to enter the labour market. They are efficient, willing to learn and capable of discourse and are strengthened in their ability to think critically and reflect.
15. Infrastructure and services support the provision of high-quality and competitive education, research and business services.
16. Resources are handled in a considered and sustainable manner, i.e. in an economically, socially and environmentally responsible fashion.
17. The organisation of structures and processes is effective and efficient.