



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

POLICY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF RESEARCH AT UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

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¹ This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.

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1. Description

This policy specifies principles and overall responsibility and division of roles for quality assurance and enhancement of research at Umeå University. The policy provides guidance for quality assurance and enhancement procedures within research at all levels of the University. Together with other policy documents, the policy will help foster continual enhancement of research quality and the confidence of external parties.

2. Background

Umeå University has a mission to conduct high quality research that expands understanding of the world, that can be used by society and that can contribute to the scientific basis and expertise required for the University's courses and programmes. High-quality research derives from academic freedom, the expertise of each researcher, curiosity, creativity, assuming responsibility, peer processes that maintain quality and integrity, and the conditions provided to the researchers in the form of time, resources, infrastructure and support services.

Ensuring high quality and integrity in research is a natural part of a university's work and is also enshrined in Swedish legislation², different international guidelines, recommendations and agreements³. Through the Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF), Swedish universities and university colleges created a joint framework for their quality assurance and enhancement of research, which this policy draws inspiration from.⁴

According to SUHF's framework, higher education institutions should have publicly accessible principles, division of responsibilities and roles and working methods for ensuring and developing quality in research. These should be appropriately designed to support strategic work at all levels and involve both management and staff. The higher education institutions should ensure regular follow-up and repeated assessment of research operations as a basis for quality enhancement, priorities and strategic decisions.

This policy lists common principles and ambitions for quality assurance and enhancement procedures at Umeå University. Division of responsibilities and roles and working models, including for regular follow-up and recurring assessment, are described in the policy at a general level. They are described in more detail in separate university-wide policy documents and by the different faculties and the Umeå School of Education. The policy provides guidance for quality assurance and enhancement procedures in research at all levels of the University.

² See, for example, the Higher Education Act (1992:1434), the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) and the Act on Responsibility for Good Research Practice and Examination of Research Misconduct (2019:504).

³ See, for example, the Magna Charta Universitatum, the European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, and the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment.

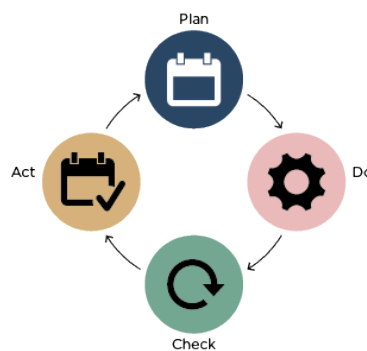
⁴ The Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions (SUHF). The joint framework for the higher education institutions' quality assurance and enhancement of research. Adopted by the association's meeting of 13 March 2019.

3. Principles for quality assurance and enhancement in research

Quality assurance and enhancement in research involves revealing and developing the quality and relevance of research, based on the intrinsic quality mechanisms in research and with consideration for the University's overall mission and operations. Umeå University is to maintain a culture of quality, resources for quality, the ability to make strategic choices and priorities and, to support this, a systematic focus on follow-up, analysis and evaluation of results, conditions and processes. Work environment, gender equality, collaboration, international perspectives and sustainable development are important perspectives for quality assurance and enhancement in research. Section 5 explores in more detail these principles, perspectives and components of quality assurance and enhancement.

Quality assurance and enhancement should be effective, trust-based and built on systematic learning.

- *Effective* quality assurance and enhancement clearly contributes to revealing or developing the quality of research cost-effectively. In particular, the work should be designed so that researchers can spend their time conducting and improving research and as little as possible on reporting and administration.
- *Trust-based* quality assurance and enhancement builds on, supports and promotes the expertise, creativity and responsibility of the researchers and the peer processes underpinning quality. This is achieved through a focus on results and quality, active collaboration and dialogue, and avoiding micromanagement, unnecessary documentation or distorted incentives. The concrete work with quality assurance and enhancement primarily occurs in the research environments, ensuring it is adapted to and relevant for the conditions and needs in each environment.
- *Systematic* quality assurance and enhancement means that we know why we are doing what we are doing, that we follow up how we do it and what results it leads to, and that we take action based on the follow-up. This type of systematic learning allows for the regular reassessment of measures for quality assurance and enhancement of research so that they are revised, supplemented or terminated as needed to continually improve the work and reduce any unnecessary workload.



Learning and knowledge transfer are also achieved through a well-functioning dialogue within and between different environments and levels within the University so that we draw lessons of each others' working models and experience and can develop joint support

functions, systems or rules where appropriate. We will also learn from the experience of other higher education institutions, both nationally and internationally, and share our own experience.

4. Working models and division of responsibilities and roles

Quality assurance and enhancement is a joint responsibility for staff, the academic leadership and the collegial consultation and decision-making structures. It supports the strategic work, i.e., the conscious trade-offs and priorities made at different levels about the focus and conditions for research based on the organisation's goals, mission and broader context.

The overall division of responsibilities and roles for quality assurance and enhancement of research follows what is specified in the rules of procedure, decision-making and delegation procedures, and other policy documents. This includes the following:

- *The University Board and the Vice-Chancellor* have overall responsibility for adapting the organisation to achieve high quality.
- The Rules of procedure for Umeå University specify that *the Faculty Boards* have strategic responsibility for research, including public outreach and promoting societal impact, and responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement of research within each faculty's subject areas. The Umeå School of Education is tasked with coordinating, developing and ensuring the quality of educational sciences at the University.
- *The departments*, together with units and centres, are the basic units within which the University's research, education and public engagement are conducted, and where the day-to-day quality assurance and enhancement occurs.
- *The Strategic Council for Research and Doctoral Education (FOSTRA)* is tasked with specific responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement of research and doctoral education.

Other important forums for mutual learning, overview, coordination and planning of decisions are the other strategic councils, University Management dialogues with each Faculty Management, the recurring manager and department heads meetings and various networks. The University Management Council has a meeting once a year under the theme 'research quality'. FOSTRA organises recurring thematic forums for university-wide discussions.

The Faculties and the Umeå School of Education are responsible for providing a comprehensive description of how systematic quality assurance and enhancement occurs in their organisations. This includes both activities at the Faculty level and how the Faculty creates the conditions for and follows up department-level quality assurance and enhancement.

FOSTRA is responsible for formulating plans for the following, proposing decisions by the Vice-Chancellor as needed:

- analysis for follow-up and enhancement of research;
- external peer reviews and evaluations of the University's research and utilisation of the results;



- prioritisation, design, coordination and follow-up of other activities within quality assurance and enhancement at the university-wide level;
- follow-up of the Faculties' and the Umeå School of Education's quality assurance and enhancement to allow mutual learning within the University and to identify the need for measures.

The University Board receives an annual quality report based on FOSTRA's follow-up.

5. Clarifications

5.1 The quality and relevance of research

The quality of research is assessed according to quality standards developed and maintained in a multitude of quality mechanisms in all stages of the research process, with peer review and with collegial dialogue. Quality is revealed by research questions and research implementation living up to these standards, through publication and peer review of the findings and by others concluding that the findings advance the knowledge front and stimulate more research, development and applications.

Societal relevance, i.e., the research's possible consequences and importance in society in the short and long term, is also an aspect of the quality of the research. Umeå University has been given special responsibility to pursue research in areas important for meeting regional and national challenges. Research is also important for providing the scientific basis and expertise needed for the University's courses and programmes.

Scientific quality, societal relevance or strategic importance for courses and programmes, for instance, can all be more or less dominant reasons to prioritise research within specific fields or problem areas. They are not, however, mutually exclusive and there should always be a desire to maintain and enhance high scientific quality, based on the conditions within a specific area or a specific environment.

5.2 Quality assurance and enhancement

Quality assurance and enhancement within research involves maintaining and developing good conditions for research and its peer quality mechanisms (quality enhancement) and as a basis for this to follow, analyse and evaluate performance and quality in research (quality assurance). The overall aim is to enhance the quality and relevance of research and to highlight processes and outputs for society. The peer review processes intrinsic to the research process are the basis for quality assurance and enhancement.

Since research conditions and traditions differ between fields, research quality should primarily be assessed based on its national and international impact and importance within its specific field. However, there needs to be an openness to discuss quality standards and findings even between fields, particularly when it comes to transdisciplinary and emerging research fields.

5.3 Components of quality assurance and enhancement

A. Culture for quality in research

Umeå University works systematically to support, maintain and follow up:

- 1) conditions for freedom of research;
- 2) good research practice and research ethics;
- 3) peer quality assurance processes and a well-functioning culture of quality in research;
- 4) public engagement and collaboration with external parties for mutual benefit, and initiatives to ensure that knowledge and expertise at the University benefit society;
- 5) that research and education are closely linked.

B. Resources for quality in research

Umeå University works systematically to:

- 1) ensure long-term talent acquisition and management for the enhancement and renewal of research;
- 2) strategically allocate research resources in a manner that enhances quality;
- 3) use and develop appropriate processes for prioritising and long-term renewal of research infrastructures;
- 4) give researchers and research environments appropriate support.

C. Strategic choices and priorities for enhancing and renewing research

Umeå University

- 1) makes strategic decisions based on visions and goals, dialogue, and follow-up, analysis and evaluation;
- 2) works to create good conditions for the development and renewal of research and research environments.

D. Follow-up, analysis and evaluation

Umeå University systematically ensures a basis for quality enhancement, prioritisations and strategic decisions by:

- 1) continuously collecting and analysing information pertinent to the quality and relevance of research;
- 2) ensuring external peer review assessments of research and research environments from national and international perspectives.

Umeå University's ambitions within the above areas are described in more detail below.

A. Culture for quality in research

A 1. Freedom of research

Umeå University works systematically to support, maintain and follow up the conditions for freedom of research.

Umeå University's vision emphasises that the organisation rests on core academic values.

Freedom of research is a core academic value.

The freedom of researchers to choose research questions and methods and to formulate, publish and communicate their findings is a prerequisite for the quality and legitimacy of research. Freedom also entails responsibility for each researcher to:

- advance the frontiers of knowledge;
- maintain integrity by not allowing choice of research questions and methods or publication of results to be limited by political, financial or other interests;
- reflect on the consequences of their research;
- contribute to a research environment that promotes the free pursuit of knowledge and allows for diversity of perspectives.

The University promotes freedom of research by:

- directing and allocating resources to allow researchers to ask new questions and test new approaches in their research;
- enabling cooperation across disciplines;
- supporting researchers who confront hate and threats and promoting respectful discussions between researchers;
- maintaining gender equality, inclusiveness and creativity in the work environment;
- supporting and defending academic freedom nationally and internationally;
- enabling a vibrant conversation at every level of the University on freedom of research and how it is maintained.

A 2. Good research practice

Umeå University works systematically to promote good research practice and to prevent and deal with misconduct in research. Umeå University has systems for managing suspicions of research misconduct and other deviations from good research practice.

Umeå University's vision statement includes its aspiration to help society better prepare to meet current and future challenges with science-based knowledge, commitment and an ethical approach.

The value of research derives from the ability of other researchers and society at large to trust that it has been conducted according to good research practice and that misconduct is discovered and addressed. Each researcher is responsible for:

- taking into account the state-of-the-art when developing research ideas and, when relevant, considering societal needs and potential implications;
- designing, conducting and documenting their research carefully and in a well-considered manner, in accordance with science and proven experience;
- making proper and conscientious use of research funds;
- publishing results and interpretations in an open, honest, transparent and accurate manner.

Umeå University promotes good research practice and works to prevent misconduct by:

- regularly discussing and sharing experience about research ethics and good research practice, and ensuring that education, support, processes and routines are designed to work within all research fields and employment categories and to promote the advancement of research;
- regular training on good research practice and ethics in the research process;
- supporting researchers on matters of research ethics and good research practice, open science, data storage, data management and legal questions;
- providing proactive measures and routines to prevent misconduct from occurring, continuing or repeating;
- providing procedures for addressing suspected misconduct or deviation from good research practice;
- providing information on rules, policies, requirements from research funding bodies, division of responsibilities and available resources in the form of support and training.

A 3. Peer quality assurance processes and culture of quality

Umeå University supports and maintains peer quality assurance processes and a well-functioning culture of quality in research.

Umeå University's vision statement expresses a desire to develop and to strengthen our position in the scientific community and to have a dynamic and open culture where we rejoice in the success of others and that what we do tomorrow will be even better than what we do today.

Together with the peer quality assurance processes intrinsic in research, this desire for continual improvement is the foundation for a well-functioning culture of quality.

Umeå University has signed the European Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment, thereby joining the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment.⁵

Each researcher is responsible for:

- exposing their ideas and findings to internal and external peer review by presenting and publishing research at various stages of the process;
- contributing to the scientific environment and collegial quality enhancement through respectful critical review, scientific discussions and mentorship.

Umeå University actively promotes:

- an ongoing conversation on research quality, quality standards and quality assessment that considers the diversity of contributions and career paths within research, in accordance with the different needs and preconditions of research within different fields and contexts;
- well-functioning local, national and international peer quality assurance processes;
- comparisons of research quality in our own environment with similar environments, including developing methods that work in different fields and contexts;
- the ambition to continually improve regardless of starting point;
- a culture of openness, encouragement and self-reflection;
- mutual learning across departments and faculties and active learning from experience outside the University;
- broad participation and a committed academic leadership.

⁵ <https://coara.eu>.

A 4. Engagement, collaboration and contribution to society

Umeå University works systematically to encourage and follow up:

- collaboration with society and external parties for mutual benefit; and
- initiatives to ensure that the University's knowledge and expertise benefit society.

Umeå University's vision statement notes that the University takes responsibility for society and the future and is to be an attractive partner for cooperation, adjusts to changing demands and expectations of society and takes a leading role in the transition to a sustainable society. We strive to contribute new knowledge of global importance, inspired and propelled by the sustainable development goals defined in the 2030 Agenda, and to generate research that leads to innovations and applications that benefit society. We are to be a motor for growth and to develop northern Sweden into a knowledge region by combining our own and the region's strengths, challenges and needs. We have deep and long-term relationships with the private and public sectors and work with outreach and collaboration to strengthen our own knowledge development while creating added value for our partners.

In their research and in processes of public engagement, collaboration or innovation, and in the manner that is appropriate within their own research field, each researcher is responsible for:

- conducting research and innovation in an open and transparent manner and being responsive to the various stakeholders;
- reflecting on the possible societal implications of their research in the short and long term;
- promoting the dissemination and utilisation of the generated knowledge and expertise.

Umeå University supports this through strategic work to promote public engagement and societal impact, in the form of:

- efforts to increase knowledge, understanding and acceptance of public and societal engagement within research with regular discussions on benefits, methods and challenges;
- good organisational conditions and support structures, including innovation support systems and support for other processes that promote and highlight the impact on society;
- follow-up of public engagement, knowledge dissemination and utilisation and the University's promoting and support structures.

Mutual benefit for society and external parties can include, for instance, societal relevance, research funding, empirical evidence, test beds or joint doctoral programmes.

Knowledge and expertise are disseminated and benefit society in a variety of ways, including:

- open and free access to knowledge (e.g., through courses and programmes, popular science lectures, publications, meeting places);
- application-specific knowledge, such as through contract research, contract education, and professional education and training;

- innovation processes/projects, such as patents, research companies, and social, product and service innovations;
- specific knowledge platforms, such as databases, biobanks, software and open source code.

A 5. Linking research and teaching

Umeå University works systematically to ensure a close link between research and teaching.

Umeå University's vision statement emphasises that research and teaching support each other and that it is natural to always offer teaching within the areas where we conduct research.

The mutually reinforcing link between research and teaching is underpinned by staff combining teaching and research roles in comprehensive academic environments that include teaching, research and outreach to third parties. Teaching can strengthen research in multiple ways. This includes the interaction with students and colleagues and the need for teachers to gain a broader overview of a field to be able to teach a subject or course. These then contribute to the research conducted by teachers. Additionally, the education of Master's and doctoral students help ensure access to qualified staff in the future.

Umeå University supports this connection by:

- providing access to educational development and qualifications to active researchers and enabling their participation in developing and teaching courses and programmes;
- enabling teaching linked with strong research environments;
- strengthening research environments within areas where Umeå University provides education to meet societal needs.

B. Resources to promote quality

B 1. Recruitment, career paths and career support

Umeå University works systematically to ensure long-term talent acquisition and management for the development and renewal of research.

Umeå University's vision is to be an attractive employer chosen by successful staff thanks to our creative academic environment, first-class infrastructure and positive work environment, and where good leadership on all levels inspires staff to grow. The University wants to be characterised by an inclusive culture where equality, diversity and equal opportunities are self-evident.

Umeå University has joined the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and the Human Resource Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) process has recognised the University with the "HR Excellence in Research Award", an award that requires continuous development.

Strategic talent acquisition and management means that Umeå University works long-term, structured and focused on attracting, retaining, on-boarding and introducing new staff,

developing and retaining existing staff and off-boarding and retraining departing staff as needed. We promote increased quality, development and renewal in research through:

- planning processes in advance of recruitment that allow comprehensive strategic considerations, review of priorities and the emergence of new fields, including both targeted recruitments and broad recruitments that are not limited to specific disciplines or projects;
- open, transparent and merit-based recruitment processes designed to attract highly qualified applicants from around the world and with a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives;
- active recruitments that include identifying and contacting potential applicants;
- offering attractive terms related to time and resources for research, both at the time of the recruitment and for long-term career development;
- systematically introducing new researchers and maintaining an open, inclusive and stimulating academic climate for everyone, regardless of background or perspective, not least for young researchers and foreign researchers;
- effective career support in all stages of a career;
- proactive and systematic efforts to attract and affiliate prominent visiting researchers to us;
- strategies for identifying and retaining strong researchers and ensuring continued influx of researchers to research environments.

B 2. Research funding

Umeå University allocates research funding strategically and to promote quality in research.

Umeå University's funding allocation models, financial instruments, principles for co-financing and special initiatives:

- provide predictable conditions for researchers and research environments;
- consider the range of conditions and needs among different research areas, researchers and contexts;
- are designed around explicit goals;
- are allocated transparently and clearly;
- are followed up and designed to allow evaluation of effects, including from a gender equality perspective;
- leverage follow-ups and evaluations when structuring future research funding.

B 3. Research infrastructure

Umeå University employs and develops appropriate processes for prioritisation and long-term renewal of research infrastructures.

Umeå University's vision statement emphasises that successful staff choose us, thanks in part to our excellent infrastructure.

Umeå University works with prioritising and long-term renewal of research infrastructures through processes and support forms on the faculty and department levels and university-wide processes for research infrastructures, including:

- forums for university-wide strategic discussions;
- policy documents for planning, prioritising and funding university-wide research infrastructures;
- processes for the Swedish Research Council's needs inventory and calls for targeted funds for research infrastructures and other research funding organisations' calls aimed at research infrastructures;
- processes for university-wide co-funding of research infrastructures.

B 4. Research support

Umeå University works systematically to provide researchers and research environments with appropriate support.

Umeå University's vision includes competing successfully for external funding, being active in national and international forums and providing support and services that promote the forefront of research and innovation.

Umeå University's researchers and research environments are to be provided high quality support for:

- research development, planning and administration;
- being aware of and developing strategies related to national and international funding opportunities;
- structuring applications to funding organisations;
- technical and laboratory staff and infrastructure;
- financial and legal issues;
- managing research data throughout the research process, scholarly publishing and open science;
- research leadership.

Design, implementation and follow-up of support occurs in internal discussions to ensure and regularly improve the support's quality and relevancy throughout the University and as regards gender equality and equal opportunities. High quality support is made possible through strategic talent acquisition of different categories of research support staff. This can

encompass recruitment, professional development, terms of employment and appropriate organisation.

C. Strategic choices and priorities for enhancing and renewing research

C 1. Umeå University makes strategic decisions based on visions and goals, dialogue, and follow-ups, analyses and evaluations.

C 2. Umeå University works systematically to create good conditions for the development and renewal of research and research environments.

Umeå University's vision statement notes that security, trust and confidence enable the risk-taking necessary for knowledge breakthroughs, that we invest in creative and innovative environments that can take on urgent challenges to secure a sustainable future and that ground-breaking research makes us world-leading in several disciplines. Our vision also notes our wide range of activities, our tradition of intradisciplinary collaboration and that we have long-term and strategic priorities with forethought and boldness.

Umeå University maintains the ability to make strategic decisions, prioritise and act as new challenges and opportunities arise through:

- explicit strategic goals with ambitious quality expectations;
- relationships based on trust and on open and honest discussions;
- appropriate allocation of responsibilities and roles;
- structures that enable a holistic view.

Researchers and research groups enable development and renewal in their interactions with global and local peer networks and with external parties. Umeå University is to:

- facilitate researcher-driven renewal and change, including interdisciplinary initiatives and high-risk research;
- follow and analyse the development and renewal of research in relation to the external world and our own potential;
- make strategic prioritisations, investments and choices to improve the quality and relevance of research in the long term;
- work proactively within arenas that set national and international research agendas.

D. Follow-up, analysis and evaluation

Umeå University systematically ensures a basis for quality enhancement, prioritisations and strategic decisions through:

- 1) regular collection and analysis of information pertinent to the quality and relevance of the research and comparisons in national and international perspectives; and
- 2) ensuring external peer review assessments of research and research environments from national and international perspectives.

Umeå University's vision statement notes that we are to meet the increased demands of competitiveness brought on by globalisation, have a strong position in Sweden and internationally, and that we are driven by a desire to strengthen our position in the scientific community.

Follow-up and review of our operations, together with monitoring and analysis of external developments, help Umeå University to:

- identify the strengths, weaknesses and improvement opportunities of different research areas in international and national perspectives, including both intradisciplinary significance and impact in society;
- better understand the overall development and conditions of research and how these could be improved;
- reflect on our research profile in relation to our potential, the national and international research landscape and society's needs and challenges, both locally and globally;
- support our internal culture of quality and calibrate our self-perception;
- collect other supporting data for quality enhancement and strategic efforts;
- communicate our research and improve the confidence others have in our ability to use our research resources appropriately.

D 1. Continuous follow-up and analysis

The University works to collect and analyse information in a way that:

- minimises workload on the organisation by coordinating follow-up processes and collection of information from existing systems;
- uses data from existing peer processes in connection with assessing applications for research funding, hiring and promoting, publishing or citing as support for qualifying and contextual assessments;
- maximises efficiency and benefit through collaboration and sharing of findings between different units and levels within the University;
- enables long-term planning and flexibility based on changing needs;
- designs and revises systematically to focus on what is most important for quality enhancement.

D 2. External peer reviews

The assessments of external reviewers on research quality and its conditions in different research environments or at Umeå University as a whole are important additions to the regular follow-up and the reviews by individual publications and projects for the purposes of:

- gaining insights and recommendations for how to develop and improve the research;
- gaining external perspectives on our research profile;
- calibrating our internal quality assessments;
- underpinning the confidence external parties have in our work.

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- compiles an overview of the reviews of research and research environments at Umeå University conducted by external parties or linked to different specific internal processes (evaluation of initiatives, organisational structures etc.);
- organises reviews using external peer reviewers that consider existing reviews and are prioritised and designed based on needs and importance for quality enhancement;
- works systematically to ensure processes prior to, during and after reviews – regardless of who conducts them – are focused on enhancement and improvement and lead to self-reflection and measures in those environments or processes that are reviewed;
- systematically follows up reviews to use, where relevant, the findings and recommendations as supporting data for quality enhancement on a broader basis within the University.

5.4 Fundamental perspectives

Umeå University's Rule for university-wide policy documents lists a number of perspectives that are to characterise university operations and that are to be integrated into policy documents.

The *student perspective* is included through the link between teaching and research and through the fact that doctoral students are a part of the researching staff at the University.

The *accessibility perspective* is covered by existing rules and procedures for work environment and communication.

The *work environment perspective* is fundamental for creative research environments and is covered by several components above (including A 1–3 and B 2).

The *public engagement and collaboration perspective* is described in its own component (A 4), but also in other components.

5.4.1 Gender equality with regard to research conditions and implementation

Umeå University's vision statement stipulates that the University is to be characterised by an inclusive culture where gender equality, diversity and equal opportunities are self-evident and a gender equality perspective is a fundamental part of the entire organisation.

From this perspective, gender equality and equal opportunities are to be supported and included in strategic discussions, planning and follow-up for:

- work environments, research environments and a culture of quality;
- recruitment and career development;
- allocation of resources;
- research support and infrastructures;
- strategic prioritisations;
- follow-up and analysis.

5.4.2 Sustainable development

Umeå University's vision statement notes that one of the University's most important missions is to drive the transition to a sustainable society and contribute to implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals.

Important components of quality assurance and enhancement that support this mission are:

- each researcher's creativity and social responsibility;
- a culture of quality that values the importance of the research in society;
- the University's breadth and diversity;
- supporting interdisciplinary collaboration and integrating knowledge together with external parties;
- strategic prioritisations;
- follow-up and analysis of research linked to the sustainable development goals.

5.4.3 International perspective

Umeå University's vision statement includes contributing to new knowledge of global significance, being a model among European higher education institutions, collaborating closely with strategically selected higher education institutions around the world, being sought-after and participating in national and international forums and having a strong position in Sweden and abroad.

Important components of quality assurance and enhancement that support this mission are:

- an academic environment and culture of quality where staff, guests and partners from other countries are welcomed and contribute, and which is focused on continual improvement in an international perspective;
- recruitment and career development that allow us to attract and retain highly qualified researchers from around the world;
- financing, research funding and research infrastructures that support international collaboration and financing from international sources;
- strategic choices and prioritisations;
- international comparisons in follow-ups, analyses and evaluations.