



# Reykjavik University

## Annual Quality Report

November 2024

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## Abbreviations

RU      Reykjavik University

QEF3    Quality Enhancement Framework 3

IWR     Institution-Wide Review

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

IAQA    Icelandic Agency for Quality Assurance

## 1. Preface

This annual quality report provides a brief overview of the progress made on recommendations and areas for improvement identified in the previous Institution-Wide Review (IWR) and remain incomplete. It summarizes the advancements since the mid-term report from 2023.

The report also provides a summary of the key quality activities carried out at Reykjavik University during the previous academic year, 2023-2024.

## 2. Recent Developments

### **Reykjavik University's Strategy 2024-2030**

Reykjavik University began developing its 2024–2030 strategy in February 2023, starting with a strategy meeting of the University Council. Following this meeting, a comprehensive work plan for the strategy's development was established.

Between February and September 2023, extensive dialogues were held with a wide range of stakeholders, including students, department chairs, representatives from industry and business sectors, government officials, and RU's partners.

From October to November 2023, general discussions were organized around key themes identified during the earlier phases. In November and December, RU staff participated in focus groups to refine goals, establish priorities, and explore the University's uniqueness and future direction. Further developments culminated in the adoption of the strategy in mid-January and its publication at the end of March. This included a vision for how the strategy would be implemented across the University and its organizational units. Implementation began in the spring of 2024 and remains ongoing.

### **Cyber-attack**

Reykjavik University suffered a cyber-attack at the end of January/beginning of February of 2024, where the University's systems were taken down and locked with encryption. This affected students and staff in several ways, but all emphasis was put on ensuring that teaching could continue in one way, or another.

As soon as the security breach was discovered, extensive measures were taken to block the access of the attackers and limit the impact on the rights and freedoms of the individuals on whom RU processes information. The Data Protection Authority and the police were notified. Experts worked on analyzing and investigating the attack, rebuilding computer systems, and recovering data. RU Support Staff also had to adapt to new circumstances in the first days and weeks after the attack, especially those whose work depended on systems that took some time to rebuild.

RU has worked on strengthening the cybersecurity infrastructure after the breach to prevent future attacks. This involves a multi-layered approach to bolster defenses across systems.

**Departmental Names and Structure**

The names of two departments were changed this year. The Department of Business changed to the Department of Business and Economics. The Icelandic name of Department of Applied Engineering, Iðn- og tæknifræðideild, has been changed to Tæknifræðideild and is now more in harmony with the English name. These name changes are intended to better reflect the study programmes offered within the faculties.

Two new Chairs were appointed this year, in the Department of Law in the Spring, and in the Department of Business and Economics in the Fall.

**Institution -Wide Review (IWR)**

A Quality Group was established in March 2024 to start the Self-Evaluation Process and prepare RU for an IWR in 2025. In the Fall of 2024, the group has been working on a self-evaluation report (SER) that will be submitted in February 2025. A site visit by the Panel is scheduled in May.

## 3. Internal Quality Reviews and Enhancement Activities

**Internal Monitoring and Review**

Annual quality reports from departments have now been submitted twice. They are read and discussed by the Deans and the Department Chairs and used for further reporting. The next step is to document how these reports are utilized to ensure they are of the best and most effective use. Creating these reports strengthens the quality culture, helps departments keep an overview of their main activities in one place, and will assist in other quality reviews.

In the annual quality reports, it is for example specified which study programmes underwent ongoing monitoring or periodic review, and whether these resulted in any curriculum changes. Plans for the next periodic review are also listed in the report. The newly published guidelines on Internal Monitoring and Review from IAQA will support this work, making it more formalized than before.

**New study programmes**

- A new undergraduate programme in Applied Industrial- and Energy Engineering was established in cooperation with University of Akureyri (UNAK) in the fall of 2023.
- A new interdisciplinary 60 ECTS programme at master's level in environmental psychology and 3D technology started in the fall of 2024. The study line is a cooperation between the Department of Psychology and Department of Computer Science.
- Department of Business and Economics started a new master's programme in the fall of 2024 in Data Management and Data Analytics.
- The MPM programme went through a complete overhaul in the academic year 2023/24. No students were admitted for the fall of 2023, while the programme was redesigned.

- Two micro-credentials study lines were established: in Sport Psychology and Performance Analysis in Sports. Both are 30 ECTS credits at master's level.
- Proposals for a 60 ECTS Master's programme in Neuropsychology and a 120 ECTS master's programme in Neuropsychology and Rehabilitation are being finalized for submission to the RU Executive Council.

#### **Examples of Changes Following Programme Reviews**

- Semester Structure: The first semester for Applied Engineering studies has been changed from a 12+3-week arrangement to a 15-week arrangement. This adjustment aims to help students better adapt to the demanding curriculum.
- MSc Programme Restructuring: The MSc in Sport Science has been restructured to offer specializations in Coaching, Sport Psychology, and Performance Analysis. Additionally, the programme is now taught in English to attract a broader range of students.
- Undergraduate Programme Review: An extensive review of the bachelor's programme in Department of Law led to several changes implemented in early 2024. These changes aimed to update the curriculum and enhance the overall educational experience.
- The Department of Engineering implemented a new structure, dividing academic programmes into four units. This change was made to streamline administration and improve programme management.

#### **Upcoming Reviews and Enhancement Initiatives**

This academic year, the focus will be on tasks related to the IWR, including writing, publishing new quality processes, and enhancing existing ones. Many study programmes are scheduled for reviews in 2025-2026. See list on page 10. As part of QEF3, support units shall undergo internal monitoring and quality reviews. This process has not been systematically implemented, but RU will begin planning in 2025.

#### **Implementation of strategy**

All academic departments and support units are currently putting forward initiatives and projects based on the new RU strategy which will be implemented in 2025 and forward. All initiatives and projects will be mapped centrally along with a time plan and goals of finishing dates. Key performance indicators are being identified to follow up on the four strategic objectives and a list of more detailed indicators has been put forward to follow up on more specific emphasis and projects of the strategy. Currently, the dashboard for tracking initiatives and projects is being set up along with metrics and milestones. This work was delayed due to the Cyber-attack early this year but is now on track. Once this is ready this will help the University and its leadership to systematically and explicitly evaluate the status of strategic projects and initiatives, and to follow the status of key indicators of the strategy, including survey data, e.g., survey of first-year experience, numbers of new graduates with work, and teaching evaluation and research output and impact via several methods.

The upcoming months will be dedicated to implementing the strategy. In preparation, minor adjustments to the organizational structure are being planned to better support this initiative.

## 4. Areas for Improvement from IWR

Eight areas for improvement were highlighted by the review team in the IWR report. Two items are no longer relevant and, therefore, are not addressed here.

### University's Quality Assurance system

*Involve the Deans and Department Chairs in reviewing the design and plans for implementation of the University's Quality Assurance system - this should build on the existing quality cultures and commitment to strategy-driven enhancement; and should recognise opportunities provided by the new organisational structure.*

#### **Status 2024**

A quality policy will be adopted in December. A Quality Group is active in reviewing the Quality Assurance System and evaluating its implementation. It discusses its tasks at e.g. staff meetings to further raise awareness.

### Quality Assurance System and SLR

*Consider how the revised Quality Assurance system (referred to above) can be used to inform efficient implementation of future Subject-Level Reviews.*

#### **Status 2024**

Annual quality reports from departments have been submitted for the past two years. The next step is to document how these reports are utilized. When done well and managed properly, this process should cover many aspects and be beneficial for the next review of academic units. To ensure consistency and that a report is prepared and followed up annually, a procedure is being developed.

### Support for Pedagogic and Technological Competence

*Strengthen and widen the range of support for pedagogic and technological competence to include all people with teaching roles, in particular sessional staff, and teaching assistants.*

#### **Status in 2024**

A course for new teachers who are taking their first steps in teaching has been refined. It aims to help them create a syllabus and outline how they plan to work with students on the learning outcomes of the course they are about to teach. Assigning new teachers to one course helps the educational developer with follow-up.

A teaching assistant training programme has been developed in collaboration with the Department of Computer Science. The purpose of the programme is to support TAs in their roles, primarily in teaching problem-solving classes. Another programme is being developed with the Department of Psychology, where the roles of TAs differ, such as leading discussions.

A new SharePoint website for teachers is nearing completion and will soon be available to all teaching staff. This site offers pedagogical support materials, including information on AI usage, templates, guidelines for rethinking assessments, and details on the digital tools used in teaching. The website will be accessible in both Icelandic and English.

## Student Information System

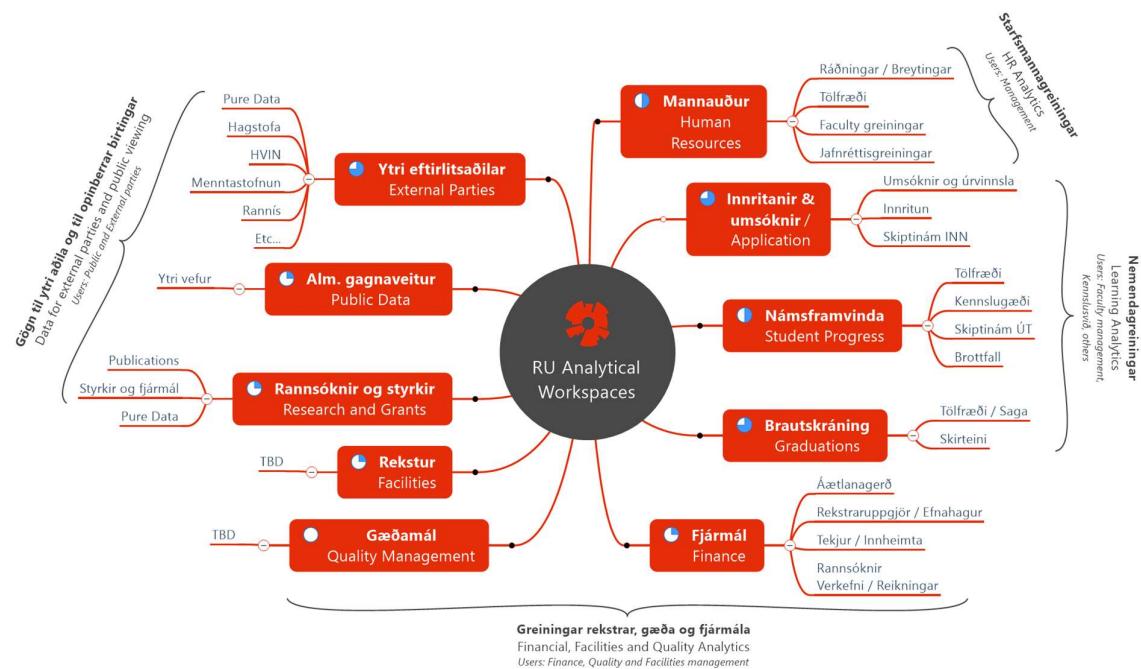
*Expedite the implementation of a Student Information System.*

### Status 2024

RU Student Management System has been maintained as needed but further development is on hold pending future decisions.

RU analytics continues to build on the data warehouse already in place for the past 5 years. Today data is harvested from all major source systems making analysis accessible. Various KPIs are already monitored through dashboards and ad-hoc analytics can be easily produced on demand. In relation to a project done in cooperation with the Icelandic government, key KPIs of RU have been aligned with the current University performance measurement environment.

Key KPIs like dropout rate, graduation rate and various counts are being redefined and will be displayed in a new dashboard made available to both government agencies as well as internal management. This project is ongoing and expected to be finalized mid Q1 2025. The following figure gives an overview of the analytics environment for RU. The "moons" give an indication of the status of each analytics area.



## Career Review and Development Process

*Involve senior academic staff to explore the benefits of introducing a career review and development process for a wider and longer-term view than the current annual Faculty Contribution Report through a process to include and acknowledge teaching and service in addition to research.*

### **Status 2024**

In autumn 2024 all Department Chairs and Deans agreed on the importance of developing a more comprehensive and long-term faculty contribution report for teaching and service for faculty members in addition to the comprehensive faculty contribution report already in place for research. A draft of the template for these reports are ready and will be finalised in early 2025. In addition to quantitative measures for teaching, such as teaching evaluation scores, number of students in classes taught, number of ECTSs taught and number of students supervised, the aim is for the report to include a self-evaluation and reflection of teaching methods, new technological or pedagogical developments and thoughts on future developments in teaching and student involvement. As regards services the report will focus on diverse contributions of services both inside and outside the University.

## Formalisation in Selection of Sessional Teachers

*Increase transparency and formalisation in the selection and appointment of sessional teachers.*

### **Status 2024**

A procedure for hiring and onboarding part-time lecturers is being finalized and will soon be published as guidelines for departments. These guidelines aim to standardize the process and clearly define responsibilities. Many departments have their own procedures in place since a few years ago.

**Study Programmes scheduled for review 2024-2025**

| Study Programme  | Degree                        | Credits (ECTS) | Next Periodic review |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Business Administration                                | BSc                           | 180            | 2024/25              |
| Business Administration with minor in Computer Science | BSc                           | 180            | 2024/25              |
| Business Administration with minor in Law              | BSc                           | 180            | 2024/25              |
| Economics with Management                              | BSc                           | 180            | 2024/25              |
| Economics with Finance                                 | BSc                           | 180            | 2024/25              |
| Executive MBA  | Qualification at Master Level | 90             | 2025/26              |
| PhD study in Business Administration                   | Phd                           | 180 (minimum)  | 2024/25              |
| Law  | BA                            | 180            | 2025                 |
| Law – Business Minor                                   | BA                            | 180            | 2025                 |
| Master of Law  | ML                            | 120            | 2025                 |
| ML in Law based on BA in Law or equivalent             | ML                            | 120            | 2025                 |
| PhD in Law   | PhD                           | 180            | 2025                 |
| Bachelor of science in Psychology                      | BSc                           | 180            | 2025                 |
| Clinical psychology                                    | MSc                           | 120            | 2025                 |
| Applied behavioural analysis                           | MSc                           | 120            | 2025                 |
| Environmental psychology and 3D technologies           | Master's level certificate    | 60             | 2025                 |
| Doctoral studies in Psychology                         | PhD                           | 240            | 2025                 |
| Diploma in Strength Training                           | Master's level certificate    | 60             | 2025                 |
| BSc in Sport Science                                   | Bachelor's degree             | 180            | 2025                 |
| Sport Psychology                                       | Micro-credentials/No diploma  | 30             | 2025                 |
| Performance Analysis in Sport                          | Micro-credentials/No diploma  | 30             | 2025                 |
| PhD in Sport Science                                   | Phd                           | 180            | 2025                 |
| Biomedical Engineering                                 | BSc                           | 180            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Electric Power Engineering                             | BSc                           | 180            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Energy Engineering                                     | BSc                           | 180            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Engineering Management                                 | BSc                           | 180            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Financial Engineering                                  | BSc                           | 180            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Mechanical Engineering                                 | BSc                           | 180            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Mechatronics Engineering                               | BSc                           | 180            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Engineering  | BSc                           | 180            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Biomedical Engineering                                 | MSc                           | 120            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Electric Power Engineering                             | MSc                           | 120            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Engineering Management                                 | MSc                           | 120            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Financial Engineering                                  | MSc                           | 120            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Mechanical Engineering                                 | MSc                           | 120            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Mechatronics Engineering                               | MSc                           | 120            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Sustainable Energy Engineering                         | MSc                           | 120            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Sustainable Energy Science                             | MSc                           | 120            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Engineering  | MSc                           | 120            | Ongoing 2024/2025    |
| Applied Civil Engineering                              | BSc                           | 210            | 2025                 |
| Applied Electrical Engineering                         | BSc                           | 210            | 2025                 |
| Applied Energy and Mechanical Engineering              | BSc                           | 210            | 2025                 |
| Applied Industrial and Energy Engineering in Akureyri  | BSc                           | 210            | 2025                 |
| Architectural Technology and Construction Management   | BSc                           | 210            | 2025                 |
| Construction Technology                                | Diploma                       | 90             | 2025                 |
| Electrical Technology                                  | Diploma                       | 90             | 2025                 |
| Mechanical Technology                                  | Diploma                       | 90             | 2025                 |
| Business Administration                                | Microcredentials/No diploma   | 45             | 2025                 |
| BIM Technology   | Microcredentials/No diploma   | 30             | 2025                 |
| Computer Science                                       | Diploma                       | 120            | 2025                 |
| Computer Science                                       | BSc                           | 180            | 2025                 |
| Computer Science – Business minor                      | BSc                           | 180            | 2025                 |
| Computer Science - UNAK                                | BSc                           | 180            | 2025                 |
| Discrete Mathematics and Computer Science              | BSc                           | 180            | 2025                 |
| Software Engineering                                   | BSc                           | 180            | 2025                 |
| Computer Science                                       | MSc                           | 120            | 2025                 |
| Software Engineering                                   | MSc                           | 120            | 2025                 |
| Artificial Intelligence and Language Technology        | MSc                           | 120            | 2025                 |
| Data Science   | MSc                           | 120            | 2025                 |
| Digital Health   | MSc                           | 120            | 2025                 |
| Ph.D. Computer Science                                 | PhD                           | 180-240        | 2025                 |