

The impact of evaluations on the administrative burden of HEI:s

NOQA 2025 Helsinki

Tobias Osvald

2 september 2025



Governmental Assignment

Within the framework of the agency's task to coordinate a network of analysis and evaluation agencies in the higher education sector, the agency shall map out the impact of evaluations on the administrative burden at universities and university colleges.

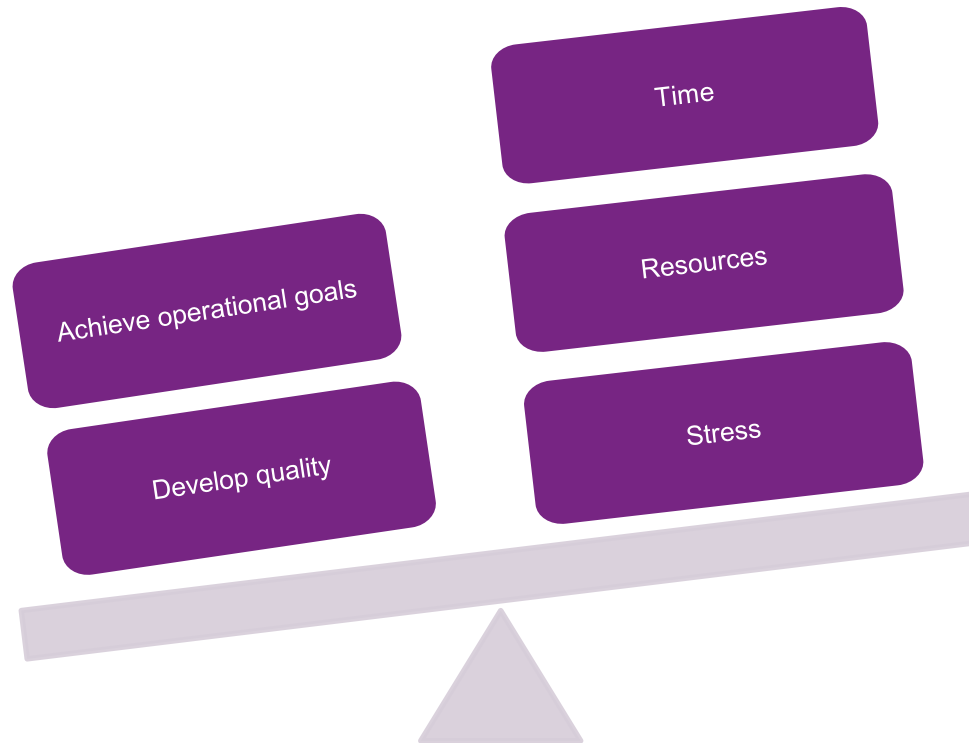
The mapping shall include an assessment of which aspects are of greatest significance and proposals on how the administrative burden can be reduced.

Administration

- When information is collected, administration arises.
- Administration may serve internal purposes or aim to meet external requirements.
- Administration **involves costs**
 - Time
 - Resources
 - Stress

Administration – burden or not?

It is not possible to avoid administration, but is it possible to reduce the burden of administration?



What was included and what was not included?

Included:

- Evaluations of activities at higher education institutions carried out by the governmental agencies in the network
- Follow-ups, surveys, assignments, etc. conducted by the governmental agencies in the network
- UKÄ's activities – with a focus on evaluations

Not included

- General legislation, appropriation directions, etc.
- Other activities at the governmental agencies, e.g. the process for research support

Mapping out the impact

- Identifying definitions and international comparisons.
- Inventory of all UKÄ's assignments, evaluations, etc. in 2023.
Collection of material from the network.
- Previous surveys of what higher education institutions think.
- Conversations with six higher education institutions for a deeper understanding of the impact of evaluations.
- Identify factors with the greatest impact.
- Provide suggestions for measures to reduce the administrative burden.

Reasons why administrative burden arises in evaluations are

- governmental steering of agencies,
 - Governed by instructions and appropriation directions, including additional assignments.
 - The agencies need information from the higher education institutions.

Reasons why administrative burden arises in evaluations are

- governmental steering of agencies,
- timing and advance notice in the evaluations that place a burden on higher education institutions,
 - Short notice
 - Time of year
 - Conflict with internal/external activities
 - Clustering of assignments
 - Same environment – smaller higher education institutions

Reasons why administrative burden arises in evaluations are

- governmental steering of agencies,
- timing and advance notice in the evaluations that place a burden on higher education institutions, and
- the implementation and design of evaluations.
 - How clear the purpose is
 - The format and questions
 - Internal structure, who is involved

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UKÄ's proposals to reduce the administrative burden

UKÄ's proposals to reduce the administrative burden in evaluations can be **summarized** as **all actors** needing to:

Actors: The Government Offices of Sweden, agencies, and higher education institutions

- review the level of ambition and strive for appropriate forms of evaluation,
- clarify intentions, purpose, and goals through intensified dialogue,
- focus on advance notice and enable long-term planning, and
- coordinate and use existing data to a greater extent.

The Government Offices could

- engage in dialogue with the receiving agencies at an early stage to clarify the government's intentions, purpose, and goals with the assignment,
- design assignments so that the evaluating agencies is given greater freedom to adapt the format based on the timeframe and purpose, and
- review the number of assignments and coordinate between departments and inquiries to reduce volume, with particular focus on assignments that burden the same environment at higher education institutions.

Agencies could

- develop forms of ongoing dialogue with higher education institutions so that evaluations provide the greatest possible benefit,
- clarify the need, purpose, goals, and timing of evaluations and assignments in dialogue with higher education institutions,
- work to further develop their evaluations so that they can be useful for higher education institutions and used by them to improve the quality of their activities,
- review the design of assignments and, as far as possible, coordinate or jointly plan implementation within and between agencies to avoid unnecessarily burdening higher education institutions, especially the same environments within them,
- in dialogue with higher education institutions and other agencies, develop methods to collect relevant data and design procedures to avoid requesting information that is already available at the institutions or other agencies, and
- develop ways to more easily make available the information about higher education institutions that the agencies possesses.

Higher education institutions could

- clarify the need, purpose, and goals for different parts of their own internal evaluations,
- review and assess how external evaluations can be useful and be utilised to improve the quality of their own operations,
- work on how to involve different staff groups in evaluations at an appropriate level, and ensure that time is allocated within core activities for this,
- develop internal administration with a focus on benefit to the core activities, and
- make available, as far as possible, data that agencies can access independently.

Summary

- There is a difference between administration and administrative burden.
- The burden can be reduced with increased benefits.
- All actors could make changes to reduce the administrative burden.
- Three causes:
 - the government steering of agencies,
 - the timing and advance notice of evaluations that place a burden on higher education institutions, and
 - the implementation and design of evaluations.
- UKÄ has developed both overarching proposals and proposals targeted at different actors to reduce the administrative burden for universities and colleges.

Discussion questions

- Is “administrative burden” a useful term in your work?
- In your context, who are the key actors to involve in reducing workload?
- Could simple changes help reduce the burden for both agencies and HEIs?

Thank you!