UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

The UvA PDCA cycle

Roles and relationships within the PDCA cycles at different levels in the organisation

Supplementary to the description of the Governance Model, version 2012

Contents

1. Introduction

This brochure is supplementary to the 'Governance Model of the University of Amsterdam (UvA)', version 3.2, adopted by the Executive Board on 24 September 2012. The purpose of this brochure is to briefly clarify the following points for each level within the organisation that plays a role in the governance godel:

• the documents that must be provided within the framework of the PDCA cycle (the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle, according to Deming) of the UvA;
• how these documents relate between levels and follow each other chronologically, adjusted to the calendar year as the planning period for research and operational management, and to the academic year for teaching.

The cycle is illustrated in the schedule in the middle of this brochure. This schedule indicates the approximate time at which each document should be completed. The precise dates are announced at the beginning of the year in the planning and control calendar.

The proper operation of the PDCA cycle at all levels is essential to the UvA's quality assurance system, as well as to the quality mark (i.e. the institutional quality assurance test and the audit report in the Annual Statement of Accounts).

A cycle that functions well also functions quickly. It is important for the Check and Act phases to follow the Plan and Do phases in quick succession. This principle also underlies the schedule outlined in this brochure. Reporting can take place quickly if the points for the Check and Act phases (i.e. annual reports or periodic reports) are assembled along the way.

Although assessments and accreditations each have their own schedules, they can benefit from the most recent documents from the current cycle.

2. Multi-year frameworks

The multi-year frameworks within which the annual PDCA cycle takes place consist of the following:

• the Strategic Plan, along with the ensuing vision on teaching and learning and research profile;
• the core agreements of every faculty with the Executive Board, as established in the covenant;
• the faculty's multi-year policy plans for teaching and research, with contents as indicated in Sections 3.4 and 4.4 (respectively) of the description of the governance model; these policy plans may be included in the faculty-specific section of the covenant;
• the faculty's quality assurance manuals for teaching and research, with contents as indicated in Sections 3.5 and 4.5 (respectively) of the description of the governance model.

The faculty may choose to assign responsibility for the implementation of the PDCA cycle to the controller or to a separate policy officer for quality assurance working in close cooperation with the controller. The party bearing this responsibility is also the first point of contact for the staff of the Executive Board, for example in the preparation of the Periodic Executive Council meetings between the Executive Board and the dean.

3. Board of Studies and Examinations Board

The PDCA cycle for teaching follows the academic year. Every year, the Board of Studies and the Examinations Board are each expected to submit a single document, namely an annual report, to be delivered shortly after the end of the academic year, and no later than mid-October. Both documents are used as input for the annual report and annual plan of the Graduate School or College concerned.

- A UvA format is available for the annual report by the Board of Studies. In broad terms, the annual report may consist of a brief introduction (in accordance with this format) to the set of recommendations delivered by the Board of Studies during the course of the year and the programme director's response to each of these recommendations. In the supplement, the Board of Studies reflects on the annual results of the degree programme, as well as on the Teaching and Examination Regulations and the programme's score in the most recent National Student Survey.
- The Examinations Board compiles its own report (required by law). In this report, the Examinations Board includes actual data about the examinations and the requests and appeals that it has processed, other decisions it has made, its recommendations regarding the Teaching and Examination Regulations and the year's most important points of discussion. Finally, the report provides a brief preview of the coming year.

The preparation and production of these annual reports is carried out by the secretary, unless the Examinations Board has agreed internally to another mode of preparation.

Programme directors do not personally prepare documents in the PDCA cycle, only written responses to the recommendations of the Boards of Studies and Examinations Boards. They do evaluate the reports from these bodies, as well as other matters concerning the programme, together with the directors of the Graduate Schools or the Colleges before they compile their annual reports and annual plans.

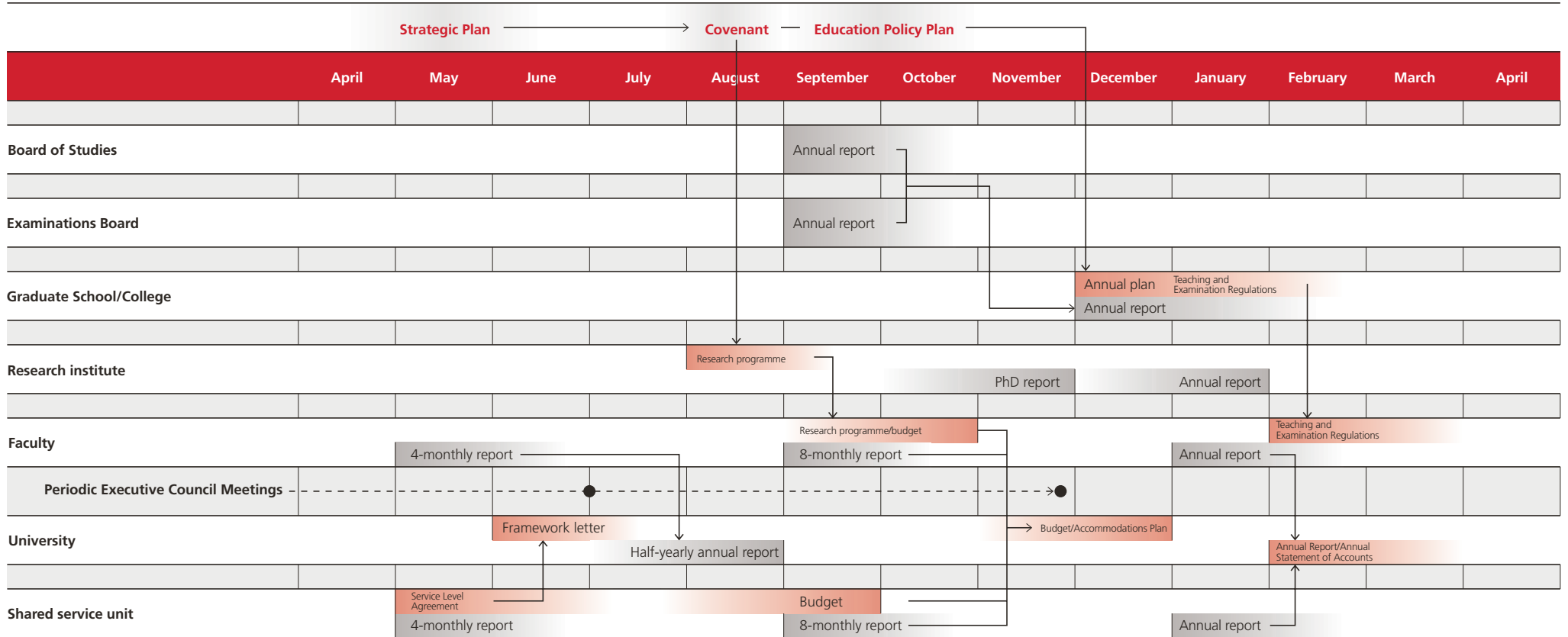# 4. Graduate Schools and Colleges

The PDCA cycle for the Graduate Schools and Colleges follows the academic year. Two interrelated documents are expected, both around the turn of the year.

- Preferably in December, but no later than early January, the annual report and annual plan. The annual report concerns the past academic year, as well as any teaching changes that were made before the current academic year. It is used as input for the faculty's annual report. It is based on the following:
  o the annual reports of the Boards of Studies and Examination Boards;
  o the reports of the research institutes involved, concerning the progress of the doctoral projects;
  o evaluation discussions with the programme directors;
  o data and trends from the educational dashboard in UvAdata.

The annual plan describes the adjustments in teaching the director would like to implement in the coming year (or in the current spring semester) based on the findings included in the annual report or other considerations (e.g. contacts with the professional field). At the time when the annual plan is prepared, the draft budget of the Graduate School or College for the new year is already known (given that the budget is derived from the performance of the past academic year). The annual plan states how any budget reductions will be realised or how any additional resources will be used.

A UvA format is available for the annual report and the annual plan.

- Preferably in January, but no later than March, a draft version of the Teaching and Examination Regulations for each degree programme within the Graduate School or College for the coming academic year, submitted to the dean for approval, preferably in April. The Teaching and Examination Regulations should follow the model for the Bachelor's or Master's degree programmes, and reflect the programme adjustments that were decided in the annual plan.

Strategic Plan → **Covenant** — **Education Policy Plan**

	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Board of Studies						Annual report							
Examinations Board						Annual report							
Graduate School/College									Annual plan / Annual report	Teaching and Examination Regulations			
Research institute						Research programme		PhD report	Annual report				
Faculty			4-monthly report			Research programme/budget / 8-monthly report				Annual report	Teaching and Examination Regulations		
Periodic Executive Council Meetings			●					●→					
University			Framework letter	Half-yearly annual report				Budget/Accommodations Plan			Annual Report/Annual Statement of Accounts		
Shared service unit		Service Level Agreement / 4-monthly report				Budget / 8-monthly report				Annual report			

5. Research institutes

The PDCA cycle for the research institutes follows the calendar year. The research institutes are expected to submit three documents in the course of the year, in which the research priority areas and other partnerships in which the institute serves as the project leader are of course included:

- In mid-September, a draft budget for the coming year, along with the associated research programme. If an institute has a long-term research plan, the annual programme consists of no more than an updated segment of this plan. The budget document is used as input for the faculty budget and research schedule.
- In late January, a substantive and financial report covering the preceding year. The contents of the report can be written in large part in November, based on the tentative figures on resources and productivity. The final financial, personnel and METIS data can be entered and the report completed in the last week of January. At that time, the report serves as input for the faculty's annual report.
- In November, in anticipation of the annual report, the institute submits the section on the progress of the doctoral projects to the Graduate Schools involved. The Graduate Schools process them into their annual reports in the section concerning PhD programmes.

6. Faculties

The timing of the PDCA cycle of the faculties follows the financial cycle. Three accountability documents must be produced within this cycle on prescribed dates, and accompanied by an 'in control' statement based on the UvA format:

- In late May, partly for the purposes of the Periodic Executive Council meeting held in the spring, the report on the first four months.
- In September/October, partly for the purposes of the Periodic Executive Council meeting held in the autumn, the report on the first eight months.
- In February, the annual report, accompanied by the annual accounts and the letter of representation (part of the UvA annual accounting procedure).

Faculties submit their draft budgets once each year, by the end of October. These documents are also discussed in the Periodic Executive Council meeting held in the autumn.

The formats for these documents are well suited for the inclusion of substantive policy and accountability. This connection between finances and the primary processes allows faculties to strengthen their management control. These documents are produced through an established procedure directed by the controller or the head of finance.

Some organisational units are accustomed to preparing their own attractive annual reports later in the year. This can of course be done by expanding the February report, but it does not absolve them of the minimum accountability required within the framework of the UvA cycle.

7. Shared service units

The timing of the PDCA cycle of the shared service units follows the financial cycle. Four accountability documents must be produced within this cycle on prescribed dates, and accompanied by an 'in control' statement based on the UvA format:

- In late May, partly for the purposes of the Periodic Executive Council meeting held in the spring, the report on the first four months.
- In September/October, partly for the purposes of the Periodic Executive Council meeting held in the autumn, the report on the first eight months.
- In February, the annual report, accompanied by the annual accounts and the letter of representation (part of the UvA annual accounting procedure).
- In April/May, an evaluation and update of the SLA (service catalogue and pricing), in which changes may be made, as mutually agreed in the Directors' Consultations and confirmed by the Executive Board in the framework letter.

The shared service units submit their draft budgets once each year, in late September. These documents are also discussed in the Periodic Executive Council meeting held in the autumn. This date is earlier than that of the faculties, in order to allow the faculties to consider the prices and amounts of services when preparing their budgets.

The formats for all of these reports and budgets are well suited for the inclusion of substantive policy and accountability with regard to the actual provision of services (in terms of both quantity and quality). This connection between finances and the primary processes allows the shared service units to strengthen their management control.

These documents are produced through an established procedure directed by the controller or the head of finance.

8. The University

At the University level, the PDCA cycle is tightly framed in terms of the processes involving the framework letter budget and the Annual Report (with the Annual Statement of Accounts and interim reports). These documents are submitted for approval by the Supervisory Board, and the UvA uses them to provide external accountability to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, to its external associates and to the public. Responsibility for the cycle at this level rests with the department of Finance and Control.
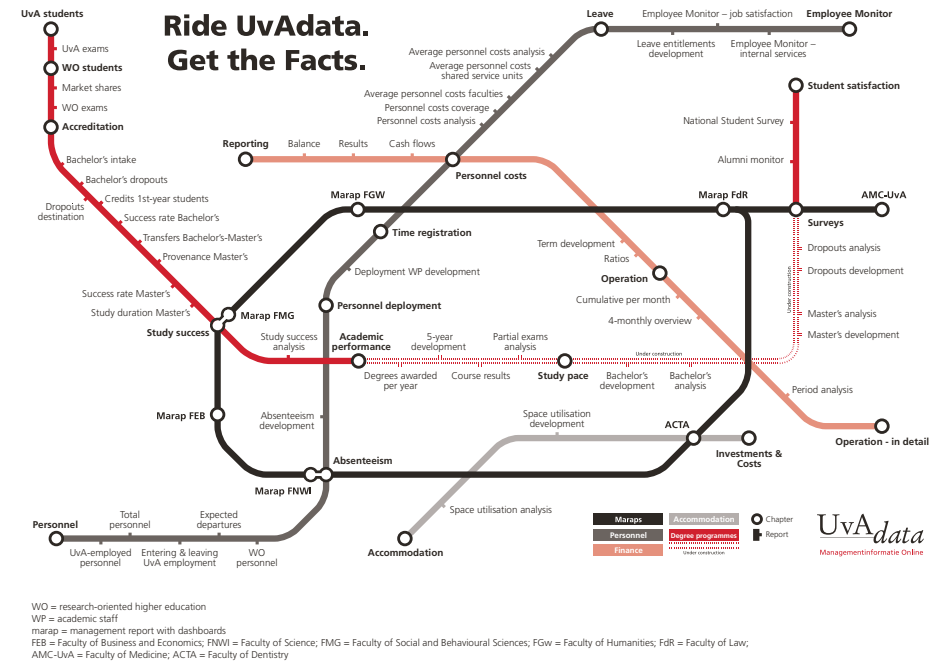
The academic control function is established within the Executive Staff. This function evaluates the intention, existence and functioning of the PDCA cycle and maintains an overview of the corresponding documents from the other levels. The procedures for professorial appointments, accreditations/assessments and changes in the range of programmes on offer are natural starting points for this control function.

An audit function is also present within the Executive Staff. This allows further investigations to be conducted in order to obtain more certainty regarding the structure and quality of task implementation and compliance with agreements and regulations. Given the UvA's decision to utilise the new statutory option of obtaining institutional accreditation, this central audit function will be expanded to include the control of quality assurance in research and especially in teaching.
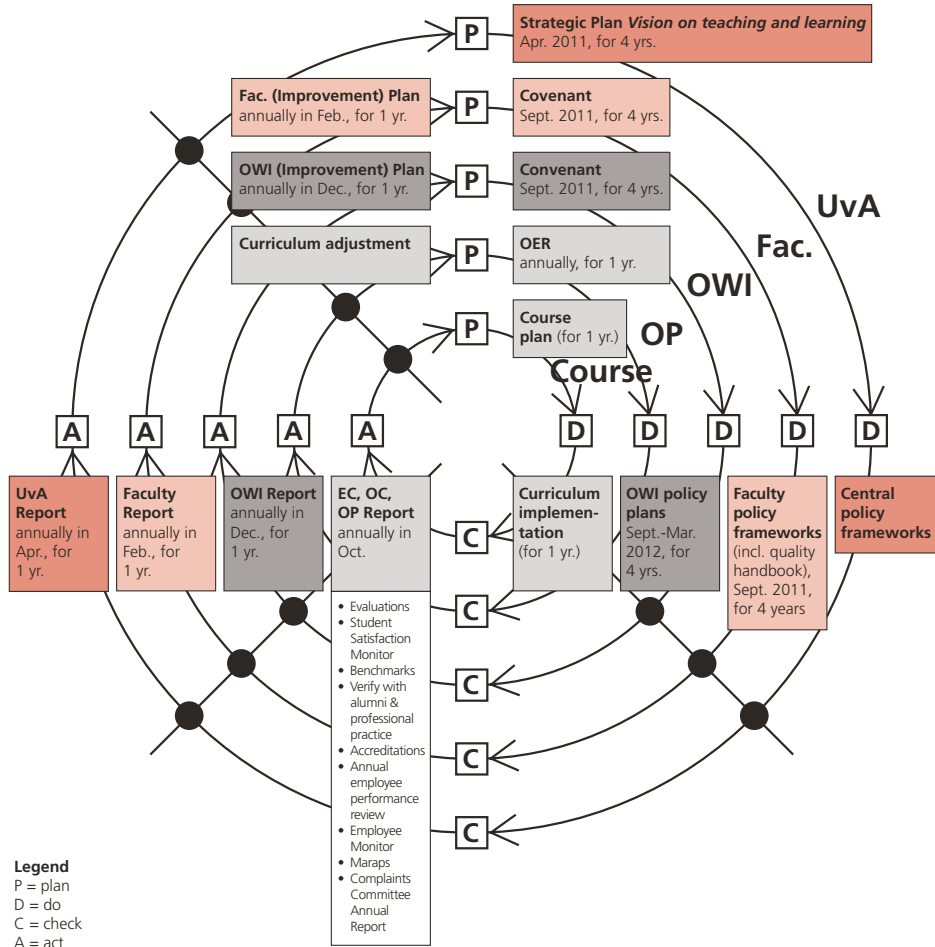
9.   Management information

Reports and decisions are based on data. Operational data are obtained from the corporate systems SAP (finance and personnel), SIS (student and academic performance), UvA Q (teaching process) and METIS (research). Management information from these systems and from national sources (e.g. the National Student Survey and 1cHO)[1] is included in UvAdata. As the University's self-service data warehouse, UvAdata is founded on seven principles: transparency at the general level, confidentiality at the detail level, universal importance to the UvA, analytic orientation, reproducibility, response to developments in information needs and increasingly rapid retrievability. Within the faculties and shared service units, UvAdata has key users who can assist the organisational unit with regard to the configuration and use of UvAdata. UvAdata also contains dashboards (maraps) that display aggregated information graphics for various levels.

Ride UvAdata. Get the Facts.

WO = research-oriented higher education
WP = academic staff
marap = management report with dashboards
FEB = Faculty of Business and Economics; FNWI = Faculty of Science; FMG = Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences; FGw = Faculty of Humanities; FdR = Faculty of Law;
AMC-UvA = Faculty of Medicine; ACTA = Faculty of Dentistry

---

[1] '1cHO': national student statistics.

The PDCA cycle

P — Strategic Plan *Vision on teaching and learning* Apr. 2011, for 4 yrs.

Fac. (Improvement) Plan annually in Feb., for 1 yr. — **P** — **Covenant** Sept. 2011, for 4 yrs.

OWI (Improvement) Plan annually in Dec., for 1 yr. — **P** — **Convenant** Sept. 2011, for 4 yrs.

Curriculum adjustment — **P** — **OER** annually, for 1 yr.

P — **Course plan** (for 1 yr.)

UvA
Fac.
OWI
OP
Course

A **A** **A** **A** **A**   **D** **D** **D** **D** **D**

UvA Report annually in Apr., for 1 yr.

Faculty Report annually in Feb., for 1 yr.

OWI Report annually in Dec., for 1 yr.

EC, OC, OP Report annually in Oct.

- Evaluations
- Student Satisfaction Monitor
- Benchmarks
- Verify with alumni & professional practice
- Accreditations
- Annual employee performance review
- Employee Monitor
- Maraps
- Complaints Committee Annual Report

Curriculum implemen-tation (for 1 yr.)

OWI policy plans Sept.-Mar. 2012, for 4 yrs.

Faculty policy frameworks (incl. quality handbook), Sept. 2011, for 4 years

Central policy frameworks

C **C** **C** **C** **C**

Legend
P = plan
D = do
C = check
A = act

EC = Examinations Board
Fac. = faculty
maraps = management reports with dashboards
OC = Board of Studies
OER = Teaching and Examination Regulations
OP = Study programme
OWI = College/Graduate School