



FINNISH EDUCATION
EVALUATION CENTRE

AUDIT OF LAUREA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES 2016

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Abstract

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Authors

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The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) has conducted an audit of Laurea University of Applied Sciences and awarded the institution a quality label that will be valid for six years from 26 August 2016. The quality system of the Laurea University of Applied Sciences fulfils the national criteria set for quality management at higher education institutions, and the system corresponds to the European quality assurance principles and recommendations for higher education institutions.

The object of the audit was the quality system that Laurea University of Applied Sciences has developed based on its own needs and goals. The freely selected audit target chosen by the institution Regional Services as part of the Learning by Developing Model. The following elements were regarded as key strengths of the quality system:

- Laurea University of Applied Sciences has a very vivid and dialogue-based quality culture in place. Quality culture leads the development of the quality system. There is a strong awareness of the Plan-Do-Check-Act philosophy throughout the organisation.
- The rationale and objectives of the quality policy of Laurea University of Applied Sciences are clearly defined and accessible to all staff members and students, as well as external stakeholders.
- The Operational and Financial Plans (OFPs) is the most important procedure that integrates the quality system of Laurea UAS and the management system at both strategic and operational levels. In the OFP, the strategy finds its concrete expression and forms a link between management, profit unit and personal level targets, as well as the monitoring of performance and results.

Among other things, FINEEC gave the following recommendations to Laurea University of Applied Sciences:

- A systematic review of student feedback processes is required. This would include the assessing the capturing, collecting, documenting, analysis and usage of student feedback and also other main sources of data on quality of activities. Laurea should concentrate on gathering the type of data which benefits it the most and perhaps introduce periodicity to feedback surveys.
- The audit team recommends that Laurea takes stronger ownership in the development of its own quality system as a whole and assess which parts of the quality system perform best and where further efforts are still needed. The FUAS external reviews are useful, but should not replace Laurea's command of its quality system.
- Laurea should re-think the necessity of having a large number of working groups with many members working on similar tasks. Development projects are gathered together well but to improve management (incl. Workload, resources) of the huge amount of the projects, it could be useful to view also their resources and timelines. The roles and responsibilities of the different actors in the quality system should be clarified.

Keywords

Evaluation, audit, quality management system, quality management, quality, higher education institutions, university of applied sciences

Tiivistelmä

Julkaisija

Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus

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Audit of Laurea University of Applied Sciences 2016

(Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulun auditointi 2016)

Tekijät

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Kirsi Mustonen & Matti Kajaste

Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus on toteuttanut Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulun auditoinnin ja antanut korkeakoululle laatuleiman, joka on voimassa kuusi vuotta 26.8.2016 alkaen. Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulun laatujärjestelmä täyttää korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnalle asetettut kansalliset kriteerit ja vastaa eurooppalaisia korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnan periaatteita ja suosituksia. Auditoinnin kohteena oli Laurean laatujärjestelmä, jonka se on kehittänyt omista lähtökohdistaan ja tavoitteidensa mukaisesti. Ammattikorkeakoulun valitsema vapaavalintainen auditointikohde oli alueelliset palvelut LbD-mallissa (Regional Services as part of the Learning by Developing Model). Laatujärjestelmän keskeiset vahvuudet ovat:

- Laurea-ammattikorkeakoululla on eloisa ja vuorovaikutukseen perustuva laatukulttuuri, joka myös konkretisoituu kehittämistoimenpiteinä. Jatkuvan kehittämisen logiikka on sisäistetty hyvin halki organisaation.
- Laurean laatujärjestelmän tavoitteet on kuvattu selkeästi. Ne tunnetaan hyvin opiskelijoiden, henkilökunnan ja ulkoisten sidosryhmien keskuudessa.
- Laurean toiminta- ja taloussuunnitelmat kytkevät yhteen laatutyön ja johtamisen strategisella ja käytännön tasoilla. Ne konkretisoivat strategian tavoitteet ja niiden seurannan aina ylimmästä johdosta tulosityksiköiden kautta yksilötasolle asti.

Laurea-ammattikorkeakoululle esitetään muun muassa seuraavat suositukset laatujärjestelmän kehittämiseksi:

- Opiskelijapalautejärjestelmä on uudistettava. Toiminnan laadusta kertovan palautteen keruu, dokumentointi, analyysi ja hyödyntäminen on arvioitava sisäisesti uudelleen. Laurean tulisi keskittyä sellaisen tiedon keräämiseen, josta on sen toiminnan kehittämiseksi eniten hyötyä ja mahdollisesti harventaa palautekyselyjen välistä aikaa.
- Auditointiryhmä suosittaa, että Laurea ottaa vahvemmin ohjat sen laatujärjestelmän kehittämisessä. On pohdittava, mitkä järjestelmän osat toimivat parhaiten ja missä on vielä kehitettävää. FUAS-konsortion vertaisarvioinnit ovat hyödyllisiä, mutta eivät voi korvata ammattikorkeakoulun omaa vastuuta laatujärjestelmän kehittämisestä.
- Laurean tulisi harkita runsaslukuisten sisäisten työryhmien tarpeellisuutta ja tehtäviä. Kehittämisprojektit muodostavat hyvän kokonaisuuden, mutta päällekkäisyyden välttämiseksi tulisi tarkastella tarkemmin niiden resursointia ja aikataulutusta. Eri laatutoimijoiden rooleja ja vastuita tulisi selventää.

Avainsanat

Arviointi, auditointi, laatujärjestelmä, laadunhallinta, laatu, korkeakoulut, ammattikorkeakoulu

Sammandrag

Utgivare

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering

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Författare

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Kirsi Mustonen och Matti Kajaste

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering har genomfört en auditering av Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu och beviljat yrkeshögskolan en kvalitetsstämpel som gäller i sex år från och med 26.8.2016. Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulus kvalitetssystem uppfyller de nationella kriterier för kvalitetshantering som fastställts för högskolor och motsvarar de europeiska principerna för och rekommendationerna om högskolornas kvalitetshantering.

Föremål för auditeringen var Laureas kvalitetssystem, som yrkeshögskolan tagit fram utgående från sina egna utgångspunkter och enligt sina egna mål. Det valfria auditeringsobjekt som högskolan utsett var regionala tjänster i LbD-modellen (Regional Services as part of the Learning by Developing Model). Kvalitetssystemets viktigaste styrkor är:

- Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu har en levande kvalitetskultur som grundar sig på interaktion och som även konkretiseras i form av utvecklingsåtgärder. Principen om ständig förbättring har integrerats väl i hela organisationen.
- Målen för Laureas kvalitetssystem är tydligt beskrivna. Såväl studerande och personal som externa intressenter känner till dem.
- Laureas verksamhets- och ekonomiplaner kopplar samman kvalitetsarbetet och ledningen både på strategisk och operativ nivå. De konkretiserar de strategiska målen och uppföljningen av målen från högsta ledningen via resultatenheterna till individnivå.

Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu ges bland annat följande rekommendationer för vidareutveckling av kvalitetssystemet:

- Responssystemet för studerande måste förnyas. Insamling, dokumentation, analys och utnyttjande av respons om kvaliteten på verksamheten måste utvärderas internt. Laurea bör fokusera på att samla in sådan information som gynnar utvecklingen av högskolans verksamhet bäst och eventuellt genomföra responsenkäter med längre intervall.
- Auditeringsgruppen rekommenderar att Laurea tar ett fastare grepp om utvecklingen av högskolans kvalitetssystem. Högskolan bör fundera på vilka delar av systemet som fungerar bäst och vilka som behöver förbättras. FUAS-alliansens kollegiala utvärderingar är användbara, men de kan inte ersätta högskolans eget ansvar för utvecklingen av kvalitetssystemet.
- Laurea bör överväga huruvida de talrika interna arbetsgrupperna behövs och vilka uppgifter de ska ha. Utvecklingsprojekten utgör en bra helhet, men för att undvika överlappningar bör högskolan noggrannare se över projektens resursfördelning och tidsscheman. De olika kvalitetsaktörernas roller och ansvar bör förtydligas.

Nyckelord

Auditering, högskolor, kvalitet, kvalitetshantering, kvalitetssystem, utvärdering, yrkeshögskola

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Description of the audit process and the Finnish higher education system

1.1 Audit targets

The target of the audit was the quality system that Laurea University of Applied Sciences has developed based on its own needs and goals. The focus of the audit was the procedures and processes that the institution uses to maintain, develop and enhance the quality of its operations. In accordance with the principle of enhancement-led evaluation, the audit did not evaluate the higher education institution's (HEI) objectives, the content of its activities or its results. The aim of the audit was to help the institution to identify strengths, good practices and areas in need of development in its own operations.

FINEEC audits evaluate whether an institution's quality system meets the national criteria (Appendix 1) and whether it corresponds to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area¹ (ESG). Furthermore, the audit evaluates how well the quality system meets strategic and operations management needs, as well as the quality management of the HEI's core duties and the extent to which it is comprehensive and effective. In addition, FINEEC audits focus on evaluating the institution's quality policy, the development of the quality system, as well as how effective and dynamic an entity the system forms.

Laurea University of Applied Sciences chose "Regional Services as part of the Learning by Developing Model" as its optional audit target. As samples of degree education, the UAS chose the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Nursing and the Bachelor's Master's Degree programme in Service Innovation and Design (SID). As the third sample of degree education, the audit team chose the Degree Programme in Social Services in Hyvinkää.

¹ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area is available at <http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/>

The audit targets of Laurea University of Applied Sciences:

1. The quality policy of the higher education institution
2. Quality system's link with strategic management
3. Development of the quality system
4. Quality management of the higher education institution's core duties:
 - a. Degree education
 - b. Research, development and innovation activities (RDI), as well as artistic activities
 - c. The societal impact and regional development work²
 - d. Optional audit target: Regional Services as part of the Learning by Developing Model
5. Samples of degree education:
 - i. Bachelor's Degree Programme in Nursing
 - ii. Master's Degree programme in Service Innovation and Design
 - iii. Bachelor's Degree Programme in Social Services in Hyvinkää
6. The quality system as a whole.

A set of criteria that is based on a scale of four development stages of quality management (absent, emerging, developing and advanced) is employed in the audit. The development stages have been specified for each audit target and they are determined individually for each audit target. The optional audit target is not taken into account when evaluating whether the audit will pass.

1.2 Implementation of the audit

The audit is based on the basic material and self-evaluation report submitted by Laurea, as well as an audit visit to the institution on 8–10 March 2016. The audit team also had access to electronic materials, which are essential in terms of the institution's quality management. The key phases of the audit process and the timetable are included as Appendix 2 of this report.

As chosen by Laurea, the audit was conducted in English by an international audit team. Prior to the appointment of the audit team, Laurea was given the opportunity to comment on the team's composition, especially from the perspective of disqualification.

² Including social responsibility, continuing education, open university of applied sciences education, as well as paid-services education.

The audit team:

Chair:

Sakari Kainulainen, Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Members:

Mateusz Celmer, Wroclaw University of Technology, Poland

Gillian Cooke, Coventry University, England

Petra Pistor, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany

Katri Vataja, SITRA, Finland

Matti Kajaste, senior advisor from FINEEC, acted as the responsible project manager and **Kirsi Mustonen**, senior advisor from FINEEC, as the backup for the project manager.

The audit visit to Laurea was conducted as a three-day visit. The purpose of the audit visit was to verify and supplement the observations made based on the audit material of Laurea's quality system. The programme of the visit is included as Appendix 3 of this report. The audit team drafted a report based on the material accumulated during the evaluation and on the analysis of that material. The audit report was written collaboratively by the audit team members and by drawing on the expertise of each team member. Laurea was given the opportunity to check the factual information in the report before the report was published.

1.3 The Finnish higher education system

The Finnish higher education system is comprised of universities and universities of applied sciences (UASs). All universities engage in both education and scientific research and have the right to award doctorates. The UASs are multi-field, professionally orientated higher education institutions. They engage in applied research and development (R&D) that supports education and regional development. The UAS system was established in the early 1990s. Higher education institutions (HEIs) operate under the governance and steering of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC). Universities and UASs receive most of their funding from the MEC, and the activities of HEIs are steered in practice by four-year performance agreements with the Ministry. The only exceptions are the National Defence University under the Ministry of Defence and the Police University College under the Ministry of the Interior, as well as Åland University of Applied Sciences under the local government of Åland (Landskapsregering).

Finland has not yet adopted a national qualifications framework (NQF). However, the Government Decree on University Degrees (2004) and the Government Decree on Polytechnics (2014) define the objectives, extent and overall structure of degrees. HEIs select their own students in Finland. However, national regulations stipulate some general principles for student admission (e.g. the equal treatment of applicants).

The educational responsibilities of the UASs' are stipulated in their operating licenses. Universities of applied sciences provide bachelor's and master's degrees. The UAS bachelor's degree consists of 180, 210, 240 or 270 ECTS credits (equivalent to three to four years of full-time study), depending on the study field. It comprises basic and professional studies, elective studies, a practical training period and a bachelor's thesis or final project.

The UAS master's degree consists of 60 or 90 ECTS credits (one or one-and-a-half years of full-time study). Applicants eligible to apply for a UAS master's degree programme must hold a relevant bachelor's degree with at least three years of relevant work or artistic experience. The UAS master's degree comprises advanced professional studies, elective studies and a final thesis or final project. The focus of the educational provision of universities of applied sciences is on bachelor's degrees. UASs also provide vocational teacher education leading to a teacher qualification. Their teacher education is aimed at those who already have a higher education degree in the relevant field.

UASs decide on the detailed content and structure of the degrees they award. They also decide on their curricula and forms of instruction. In addition to this, some fields (e.g. midwife education) have detailed regulations to some extent for the structure and/or content of the degrees awarded. UASs also actively cooperate on curricular issues under the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences.

The organisation of Laurea University of Applied Sciences

Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Laurea UAS, formerly Vantaa University of Applied Sciences and Espoo-Vantaa University of Applied Sciences) began operating in Vantaa in 1992 as one of the first universities of applied sciences to be granted an experimental licence in Finland. In 1997–1998, this experimental licence was expanded to comprise nearly 20 educational institutions in the region of Uusimaa. At that time, the name of the institution was changed to Espoo-Vantaa University of Applied Sciences, reflecting the cities that were its main owners. The Government put the institution's operation on a permanent footing in 2000, and the name Laurea University of Applied Sciences was adopted in 2001. Laurea UAS operates on a total of seven campuses in the region of Uusimaa around Helsinki. The management system of Laurea is illustrated in figure 1.

Laurea UAS is a limited company subject to the Limited Liability Companies Act, unless otherwise provided in the Polytechnics Act. The owners of Laurea UAS comprise cities, joint authorities for education and a foundation.

From 1 January 2015 on, the organisation of Laurea UAS relies on the President's Office and six (6) profit centres:

- Education and Regional Services units: East (Tikkurila campus), West (Leppävaara and Otaniemi campuses) and Circle (Hyvinkää, Lohja and Porvoo campuses)
- Development units: Education and regional development; RDI
- The Support Services unit

Laurea UAS had a total of 552 employees at the time of the audit, of whom teaching personnel account for 308 and other personnel 244. The total number of students was 7799 students, of whom 6192 were studying for a Bachelor's Degree (888 in English) and 592 for a Master's Degree (127 in English).

Laurea offers degree education on the following fields:

- Beauty and Cosmetics
- Business Management
- Business Information Technology
- Correctional Services
- Nursing
- Physiotherapy
- Restaurant Entrepreneurship
- Security Management
- Social Services
- Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Decision making organisation at Laurea

C = Hyvinkää, Lohja, Porvoo
E = Vantaa, Kerava
W = Espoo

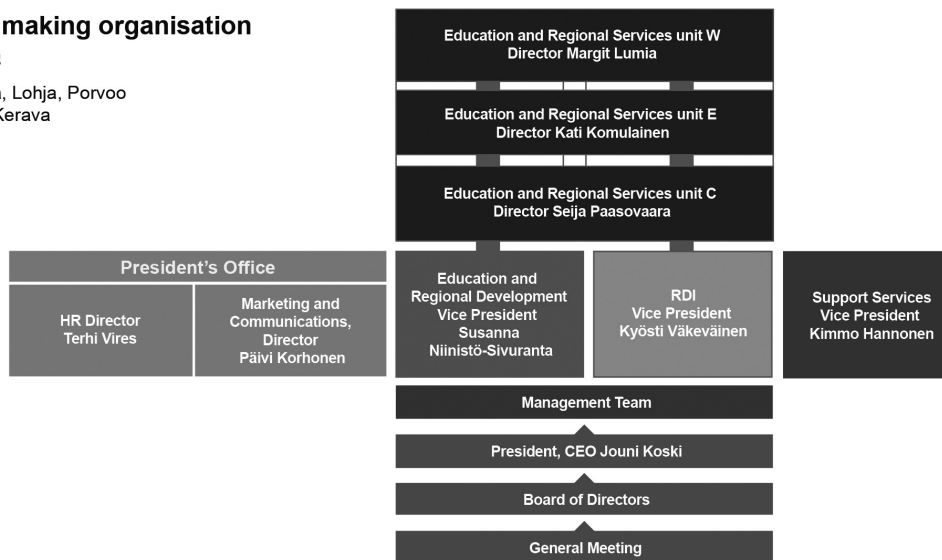


FIGURE 1: The management system in Laurea University of Applied Sciences.

TABLE 1. Basic statistics on Laurea.

Students (Full-time equivalent) *	Number
Bachelor's degree	5200
Master's degree	300
Degrees awarded **	Number
Bachelor's degree	1612.6
Master's degree	174.3
Staff (FTE) *	
Teachers	268.6
Research staff	25.5
Other staff	185.3
* Statistics from the Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015. ** Annual average of past three years	

The quality policy

The rationale and objectives of the quality policy of Laurea UAS are clearly defined and accessible to all staff members, students and external stakeholders. It is actively communicated among all relevant stakeholders in the framework of annual development days on Laurea level and various occasions of different organisational levels. A very strong and dialogue-based quality culture was visible for the audit team. Quality management activities are clearly linked to Laurea's overall strategy, although not all of the UAS's seven strategic goals receive the same degree of attention. The link between Laurea's strategy and the quality policy is formed by Operating and Financial Plans (OFP), which are based on information from a very impressive Quality and Performance Results portal. The division of responsibilities is clearly defined and seems to be comprehensible for internal stakeholders.

*The quality policy of Laurea University of Applied Sciences is at a **developing** stage.*

3.1 Rationale, objectives and division of responsibility

The overall goal of Laurea's quality policy is to support the achievement of the institution's values, strategic intent and strategic goals, which are set in the recently (2014/2015) developed Laurea2020 strategy. The quality policy and all activities of quality management falling under this policy are linked to Laurea's strategy by Operating and Financial Plans (OFPs), which translate Laurea's strategy into practice. OFPs are used both on the level of the institution as a whole and on the level of Laurea's profit centres. They contain information about key performance indicators linked to the strategic goals of the UAS or each profit centre and measures to be taken for improvement.

The current quality system at Laurea has been in place since 2009. It is consequently geared to Deming's PDCA-cycle and thus aims at continuous self-reflection and improvement. Figure 2 shows Laurea's various activities subsumed under the particular phases of the PDCA cycle.

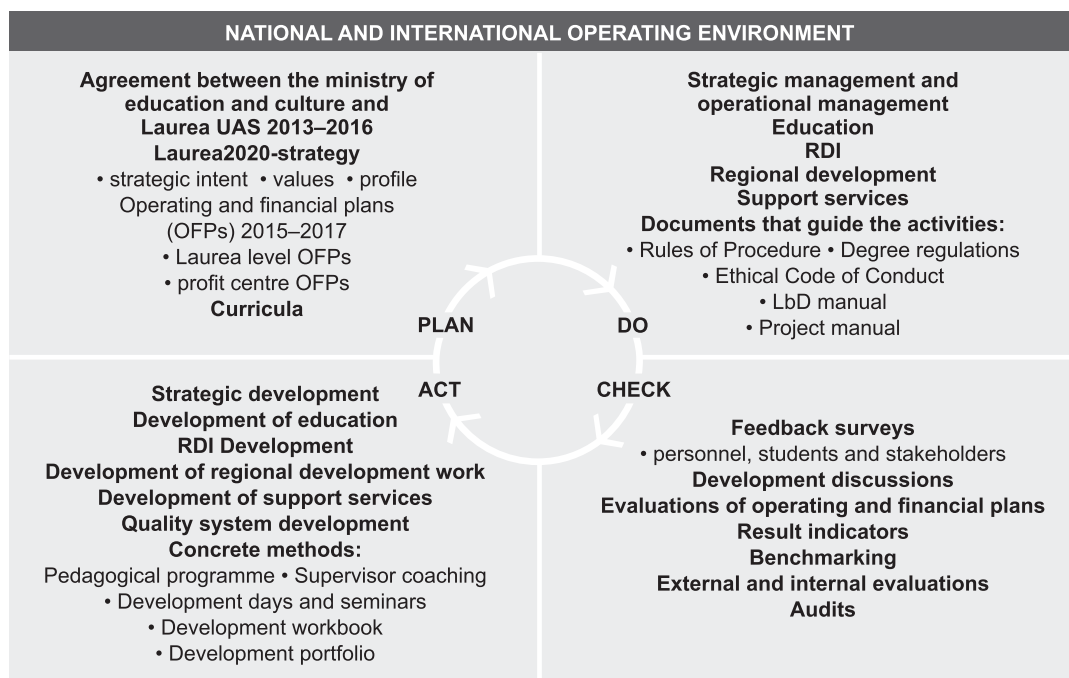


FIGURE 2: Laurea UAS's quality system.

The university of applied sciences is convinced that quality management comprises all its activities and affects all of its staff and students. Thus, Laurea has made efforts to establish a quality system that offers a variety of possibilities for staff and students to participate in the quality activities. During the on-site visit, however, it became obvious to the audit team, that some staff members struggle to connect the abstract logic of the PDCA-cycle to quality management procedures that apply to their everyday operative work, although it was evident to the audit team that staff are committed to quality work. This lack of a connection between “just doing it” and defined processes bears the risk of making quality work inefficient (See chapter 6.2 for more details in this). When students were asked for their contributions to quality work, they concentrated almost exclusively on the act of completing feedback questionnaires. The audit team encourages the students’ union to adopt a more active role in the development of education and the quality system. These opportunities are certainly offered by Laurea.

Key objectives are described concisely

In all documents provided to the audit team, the quality system and its key objectives are described concisely. They are available for staff members on Laurea’s website and in the quality handbook. The set quality system objectives were evaluated by Laurea staff in an online survey in August 2015. The results presented in the self-evaluation report suggest that the objectives of the quality

system are understandable, but need to be operationalised to become truly useful and a guiding principle for everyday work. This links to the audit team's observation concerning the lack of awareness of the relevance of procedures for quality management (see above).

Since Laurea understands quality management as being a matter for the whole staff, there are persons or groups responsible for tasks linked to quality management in all profit centres and on all organisational levels. The quality actors of Laurea and their respective tasks are listed in the quality handbook on a fairly general level. Although the tasks described in the overview contained within the quality handbook seem to differ from each other, they appear to be so closely connected that Laurea should consider combining different roles and groups to simplify paths of communication.

The link between quality management and operative management via OFPs is logical and comprehensible. The OFPs seemed to be well informed by figures and key performance indicators, which are stored in the Laurea QPR database. Obligatory key performance indicators (KPI), prescribed by the ministry are stored in the QPR. In addition, indicators can also be found there that are also valid for the Federation of Universities of Applied Sciences (FUAS). This makes them a good basis for benchmarking in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

3.2 Communication of the quality policy

Laurea's comprehensive quality handbook "serves as familiarisation material for the organisation of Laurea University of Applied Sciences and its quality management as a whole." In addition, the UAS's website gives a good overview of the quality system and the strategy process of the UAS for external stakeholders. The quality handbook clearly describes the quality management goals and the delegation of responsibility on a general level. Yet, the handbook could become even more useful – in the sense of not only serving as an information document - if it contained information about the actual persons responsible (with contact information). The quality handbook also currently does not provide any information about what to do on a concrete level to be part of the quality system (e.g. no process descriptions are provided for staff, new deans etc.). Since all information about processes, responsibilities etc. can be found on the QPR portal and intranet, Laurea should re-think the necessity for a separate, printed quality handbook.

Laurea utilises many channels of communication on quality matters

Laurea aims at "open, transparent, comprehensive and regular communications" both for internal and external stakeholders (Quality Handbook, p. 14). There are several internal and external communication channels used to spread the word on quality issues and Laurea's management. Besides "passive" informational instruments such as newsletters and OFPs, there are a number of pieces of interactive media through which Laurea staff can engage in discourse on quality issues; e.g. development days for units, the Board of Directors, or the Management Team. The staff have also

been invited to participate in development groups since 2014, which can work on different topics and help to prepare management decisions. These UAS-level development groups are intended to “promote the sharing of competence in Laurea UAS, develop more uniform practices and bring up development needs”. All staff members seemed to be well-informed about and committed to quality management at Laurea. A very strong commitment to quality culture was noticeable during all interviews. Laurea’s notion of quality management as a holistic concept and the dialogue-based quality culture correspond very well to its brand promise, “Together we are stronger”.

The documentation of quality activities by the means of Laurea QPR is on an advanced level. All interviewed staff reported during the on-site visit that the QPR was a very useful source of information for monitoring and planning. The database combines results from different evaluations and information systems in one application with information on how issues are followed up. The information in Laurea QPR is accessible for the staff and thus well supports operational management on all levels. Laurea’s quality documentation, however, is very extensive and – according to the feedback of participants in the self-evaluation process – stored in a number of different places and is therefore not very easy to find and to use. As a result, the audit team encourages the UAS to keep up the good work on quality documentation but also to further improve the QPR to reduce the complexity of the available data. Furthermore, better solutions could be found to combine and use various kinds of data gathered by the feedback system.

3.3 Link between the quality policy and the institution’s overall strategy

In the quality handbook, Laurea clearly states the inseparability of quality management and its organisational management system. Additionally, it is stated that “the organisational structure of Laurea UAS determines the basis for operational planning.” Therefore, Laurea clearly commits itself to a holistic quality management system that is adequate to its organisational structure and respects its operations in all areas.

“The Laurea2020 strategy finds its concrete expression in the Operating and Financial Plans that form a link between management, personnel competence and well-being, as well as the evaluation of activities and results. Goals and indicators used to evaluate the productivity of activities are defined in the Operating and Financial Plans of Laurea UAS and its profit centres. Goals for the following three-year period and target levels for the indicators are set in the operating and financial plan process.” (Quality Handbook, p. 20)

Strategy process was exemplary

Laurea’s overall strategy was developed in a very transparent process, involving staff and students of the UAS. The strategy development process resulted in seven central themes and respective strategic goals that are expressed in seven statements that are not only documented in the material provided to the audit team, but are also visible at the Laurea campuses that the audit team visited (Tikkurila and Hyvinkää).

In the basic material and the self-evaluation report are presented a comprehensive cascade of strategic themes, goals, underlying statements and relevant indicators. This depicts an impressively straight-forward operationalisation of strategic goals into graspable key performance indicators reaching to the level of individual staff members. However, not all of Laurea's seven strategic goals receive the same degree of attention, when it comes to quality management, as will be described in more detail in chapter 4.1.

Quality system's link with strategic management

Laurea UAS had conducted a participatory process for strategy formulation, which also supported the organisation reform. The quality system heavily relies on the participatory culture that also supports the strategic promises of the UAS. The quality system is very well linked to the strategic and operational management. Various established procedures serve the implementation of the strategy and produce ample information for the needs of the management. Laurea's operational and financial plans are the key vessel in translating the strategy to its concrete expression and forming a link between management, profit unit and personal level targets, as well as the monitoring of performance and results. At the heart of the quality system is the principle that the entire Laurea community takes part in quality work activities and maintaining its vivid quality culture.

*The quality system's link with strategic management is at an **advanced** stage.*

4.1 Information produced by the quality system for strategic management

Laurea launched a process for renewing its strategy at the same time as the updating of the organisation structure. The Laurea2020 - strategy process was extremely participatory, utilising workshops and digital tools. The approach and integration of the staff and students into the strategy process from the beginning has evidently well supported the implementation of the strategy and its promises in its later phases. As a testament to this commitment, the staff, students and even external stakeholders talk about the strategic intent with ease. The meaning of strategic promises is well understood in everyday life. Also, the Board of Directors is clearly committed to the strategy. When the strategy is so strongly intertwined with the organisation culture and values, there may have been less need for the formative processes and strict guidance of strategy implementation.

The quality system of Laurea UAS is very well linked to the strategic and operational management. The quality management process is based on the PDCA cycle and the principle of continuous improvement is evident: Laurea has clearly developed its processes over time, utilising feedback

from several internal and external audits. Laurea UAS has established processes and documents that produce useful information for the needs of the management. The Operational and Financial Plans (OFPs) is the most important tool that integrates the quality system of Laurea UAS and the management system in both strategic and operational levels. In the OFP, the strategy finds its concrete expression and forms a link between management, profit unit and personal level targets, as well as the monitoring of performance and results. Laurea's operating and financial plans gather the goals for the performance indicators, target agreement and the new result-based funding model of UASs.

OFPs form an important link between strategy and operations

OFPs define targets for the planning year and the next two years, and target levels for indicators are set in the OFP process. The goals are reviewed annually. It's highly important that Laurea has a dialogical process and shared forums where the goals are synthesised and inter-linkages between the profit units can be recognised. In Laurea, personnel take part in the planning process of OFPs where targets are negotiated on different levels of the organisation and development needs are identified, as well as evaluating and developing the functions. This kind of participatory process has been put in practice quite recently, in order to highlight the role of every employee in quality management and for achieving the goals. The implementation of OFPs is monitored every four months by mid-term reports and they are handled by the Management team and the Board of Directors. Follow-up-information is saved in the QPR portal.

The operating and financial plans implement the strategy through the targets of the profit centres. It is also a place for risk assessment. A number of common items are present in the OFPs, however there are notable differences between units. It would be useful to reflect how much diversity and uniformity is necessary in the procedures of profit centres that they serve both strategic and operational management.

To cascade the targets to the individual level as well, development discussions with a supervisor and an employee are held annually to discuss his/her development targets. One purpose of the development discussions is to map out the competence level of each staff member and agree on any development measures that may be necessary. The common process for competence development, named as Competence2020, has been selected as one of the strategic development projects in 2016.

Strategy Implementation Matrix is expected to develop into a good practice

The Strategy Implementation Matrix is a recently piloted tool for visualising the whole picture of strategy implementation. The management found it has strengthened the link between the objectives for strategy period 2015-2020 and the goals for near future, development projects derived from these goals and the indicators that measure strategy implementation. Foremost, it is a visual instrument for use by the management. After the pilot phase, it would be good to evaluate its usefulness and whether it has helped to focus operations and clarify roles and responsibilities in

strategy implementation. To avoid unnecessary extension of quality procedures, it is necessary to assess instruments as a whole in order to map overlaps. The audit team expects the matrix to develop into a very good practice for others to adopt in the years to come.

Laurea’s Development Portfolio gathers together all ongoing, UAS-level development projects, including the strategic development projects (10 projects at the time of the audit). The portfolio provides the big picture of current development activities. To improve the management of a huge amount of projects, it could be useful to also view their resources and timelines. Development workbooks, on the other hand, are for documenting separate tasks for development.



FIGURE 3. Implementation of strategic goals at various organization levels.

The Laurea2020-strategy is strongly future-orientated, aiming to educate for the future working life and producing the future’s experts. According to the top management and the external stakeholders, the biggest challenges for quality management come from the rapidly changing operational environment that can have many unpredictable impacts on Laurea. Therefore, Laurea has actively taken part in forecasting activities related to its operations and education, RDI and finance. Laurea could perhaps utilise and interpret this information more systematically on different level of management.

Laurea's strategy implemented well

Laurea has a procedure for monitoring strategy implementation that works extremely well. It has set indicators for evaluating target achievement in the seven central themes of the Laurea2020 strategy that are followed in the OFP and QPR. Indicators quite extensively cover the intent of the themes. However, to monitor entrepreneurship, there could be some follow-up indicators for measuring long-term impacts, e.g. the amount of companies founded by graduated students. The statement of the target "A responsible higher education institution" could be more ambitious too, compared to other statements. Accordingly, purposeful indicators for social and ecological responsibility would be useful to further these goals (see more in chapter 6.4 Societal impact and regional development work).

Laurea assesses its progress through the target levels that have been set for the indicators until 2018. The indicators are monitored and reflected with arguments in the biannual Strategy Implementation Plan. It clearly depicts the results, comparing them to the target level of the year and to the results of previous years. It is important to ensure enough time for reflection of the results and development activities related to them, because they also support development activities. For monitoring progress in development activities, Laurea has set measures for its main strategic development efforts and they are regularly followed by the management team. These efforts contribute to a solid strategy implementation and the maintenance of a well-developed quality culture.

Laurea also has formulated a working process for collecting ideas. Staff members can submit their ideas by using a form via the Intranet. A virtual group of Laurea's experts evaluates ideas through a transparent process in relation to Laurea's strategy and OPFs. The idea process and culture well supports the strategic promise of togetherness and quality culture. To strengthen the strategic promise of the student being at the centre of all operations in Laurea UAS, students could be taken more evidently into part of idea management.

Laurea UAS highlights regularity and transparency in its communication about quality to their stakeholders. The UAS meets these aims and the needs of internal and external stakeholders with different kinds of communication methods. A Quality Newsletter details the central quality topic on a monthly basis. For transparency and usefulness of quality data, it is important that data is easily accessible. For the personnel, the central places for accessing data are the QPR-portal and web drive K. In the QPR-portal, data is updated on a monthly basis if necessary and the staff use it regularly – mainly to check process descriptions and responsibilities – and indicators for targets, for example the amount of graduates. Laurea could perhaps look into ways to concentrate all of the data in one place on the intranet.

4.2 Functioning of the quality system at different organisational levels and units

Laurea UAS has undergone extensive organisation reform in 2014-2015, during which time the organisation structure transformed from regional to competence-based organisation. The reform aimed for a shift towards “One Laurea”, where the operations are led and developed in a consistent manner. This has meant both structural and cultural changes. Structurally, the Development Units and Support Services unit have been formed for the purpose, and communications, marketing and HR have been relocated under the president’s management. Beside the reform, the new strategy guides to pay more attention to the needs of region, not only to focus on curriculums.

The audit team found that the reform as a whole has proceeded smoothly in a relatively short time. The main processes have been harmonized but it naturally takes time to uniform the structures, processes and culture throughout the organization. According to the management team, the reform is now in half-way. The common quality management procedures penetrate all operations, organizational levels and units. There are still some areas, e.g. in relation to regional development and feedback systems, where the functioning of the quality system needs to be improved. The main development objects have been extensively recognized by Laurea UAS and they have been described both in development workbooks and in development portfolio.

4.3 Quality culture

Laurea UAS’s quality management needs to be assessed as an inseparable part of the organisation’s management system. The current organisation structure of the Laurea UAS serves the division of responsibilities in practice. The core principle of the quality culture is that the entire Laurea community takes part in quality work activities, including strategic stakeholders and project partners. This principle is alive and repeated by the staff when talking about quality culture. Based on the audit visit, both the managers and the other personnel of the Laurea UAS are committed in quality work through their own professional roles and duties.

The roles and areas of responsibility of key quality actors of the UAS have been recently assessed and redefined. The current organisation of quality responsibilities consists of many actors and groups, and written descriptions of their tasks have been clarified since the FUAS cross-evaluation in 2014 and pre-audit in 2015. The tasks and responsibilities of various quality actors have been described in the Quality handbook and they can be found in the QPR. The audit visit confirmed that these sources are actively used by the staff. The staff knows quite well their obligations in relation to quality management, although for an outside auditor, the roles of the different groups of quality management do not unfold as easily.

Laurea has two specific quality actors that take care of the entirety of the quality system. The Strategic Steering group for Quality Operations is responsible for integrating the quality system with strategic management at the practical level. This group sets Laurea-level goals of quality

policy, approves the focal points of quality operations and is responsible for the strategic steering of the Quality System Development Group. The other group – the Quality System Development Group – is responsible for developing the quality system and quality management practices and it informs the profit centres about quality issues.

Since 2014, Laurea has exercised a policy whereby personnel have been invited to actively participate in various working and development groups, hence influencing the decision-making. The groups aim to promote the sharing of competence, the development of uniform practices and the bringing up of development needs. These groups are an essential element for Laurea's management and operation model and support the culture of togetherness. However, the model of about 50 groups is highly resource intensive, and it is necessary from time to time to define and assess their roles, objectives and intensity in order to control the workload, so as to ensure the functionality and efficacy of the model.

Development of the quality system

Laurea UAS has followed up well on the development targets and recommendations of the first audit. It also very actively takes part in the various external evaluation and benchmarking activities available and manages to accumulate useful information for the development of activities. The major part of the development of Laurea's system is done within the framework of external FUAS cross-evaluations that focus on one theme at a time. Although Laurea UAS has conducted a series of self-evaluations of its quality system, it would benefit from more decisive leadership pertaining to the overall direction and ownership of the quality management efforts.

*The development of the quality system is at a **developing** stage.*

5.1 Procedures for developing the quality system

The quality system of Laurea is amalgamated with the management system, and therefore changes to the organisational structure also necessitated changes in the quality system. The development of procedures is open to continuous development through the Development Portfolio and Development Workbooks.

In the old organisational structure of Laurea, regional units had more autonomy, causing diversity in the quality of operations. Laurea UAS is now aiming to perform better in the result-orientated funding model of the Ministry of Education and Culture by merging its resources to be more effective. Therefore the organisational structure, responsibilities and processes were updated.

The main method in developing of the quality system of Laurea has been an increase of working groups as well as layers of organisation related to quality work. This development has unfortunately increased the complexity of the quality system and the development processes. Laurea states in the self-evaluation report that for the development of the quality system, it uses SWOT-analyses, cross-evaluations conducted in the Federation of Universities of Applied Sciences (FUAS) and quality-system self-evaluations. The responsibility for these activities rests on the Quality System Development Group.

Actively involved in external evaluations

Laurea UAS takes part in external evaluations of its activities in an extremely active manner. For example, it has participated in FINHEEC's Centres of Excellence in Education evaluation in 2010, the International evaluation of Life Long Learning in 2010-2012, RDI evaluation in 2010, the Learning By Developing review in 2012-2013, and the CeQuint internationalisation evaluation in 2014 just to name a few. External evaluations have certainly become an important tool in developing its activities and are a regular part of Laurea's overall quality management efforts.

According to the audit material and the interviews on the site-visit, the principal vehicles for quality system development are the multiple cross-evaluations conducted within the FUAS consortium with Lahti and Häme UAS. The FUAS cross-evaluations have been conducted every 1–2 years. The exercises generally focused on one aspect of the system and reviewed this in all three UASs in a fairly robust way. The themes of the cross-evaluations have been the linking of the quality system to strategic and operations management, the participation of different staff and stakeholder groups in quality management, international activities, quality policy and the quality system as a whole. This is a good form of cyclical co-operation and semi-external benchmarking with institutions that have come to know each other's activities and quality systems well.

Based on self- and cross-evaluations, the Quality System Development Group has increased its knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality system of Laurea. However, it should be noted that the development of quality system itself has not been the major topic of any of the FUAS cross-evaluations, nor was it tackled in the 2015 FUAS external audit conducted together with partners from KU Leuven Association and elsewhere. This approach is both advantageous and problematic, as the FUAS evaluations are external. They offer fresh view on quality system development, but shouldn't replace the institutions own periodical review of quality system.

Stronger ownership over quality system development needed

Laurea has conducted a series of self-evaluations since the previous audit. The self-evaluations have concentrated on parts of the quality system or individual activities such as the quality management of support services. The UAS has also followed the recommendations given by the previous audit team and self-evaluated their implementation. The FUAS cross-evaluations have included a self-evaluation component, wherein Laurea has individually evaluated its performance in each of the four parts of the Plan-Do-Check-Act –cycle. According to the self-evaluation report and the interviews held, what seems to be somewhat missing is a comprehensive and periodical self-evaluation of the quality system for its fitness for purpose for Laurea's own needs. Therefore, the Audit team would like to underline the importance of strategic leadership in the development of the quality system as a whole and as part of managing Laurea. The audit team recommends strengthening and systematising the self-evaluation element in the development of Laurea's quality system to strengthen the ownership of the quality system development.

5.2 Development work after the previous audit

The history of Laurea's systematic quality work started in 2005 when the first Strategy Implementation Plan was launched. A decade before, Laurea started accentuate the awareness of quality work by setting up the first quality group and training sessions for personnel. Since then, several development steps can be identified. Systematic international evaluations started in 2007. The first Laurea audit was conducted in 2010 by the FINHEEC.

A period from 2010 to 2014 was expansive phase of the quality system. Benchmarkings, self- and other evaluations were done as well as QPR system was established as a part of management. Systematic development of Laurea's Quality system has been carried out since 2011 as part of the FUAS cooperation. New indicators have been taken in use and quality system cross-evaluations have been completed. The FUAS consortium and the FUAS-KU Leuven Association collaboration gives rise to the possibility to benchmark the quality system and quality management. The latest evaluation within this collaboration was in March 2015.

The Operating and Financial Plan was launched in conjunction with the Laurea2020 strategy in the beginning of 2015. The Strategy Implementation Matrix was seen as a link between strategy and development tasks. At Laurea level, only one OFP targets the management work and OFPs at lower levels of the organisation are in turn linked to it. According to interviews conducted at different levels of the Laurea organisation, respondents stated that the main aim is to harmonize the processes and activities of Laurea. The Development Portfolio system, the new Quality System Development Group, as well as the development of reporting as a management tool started in 2015.

Previous audit recommendations acted upon

Laurea has clearly taken into account the comments and suggestions made in the 2010 audit report. Laurea has widened the result indicators and their use in decision making, has fully launched the LbD model, and has harmonized degree structures and increased the flexibility of studying. On the other hand, the student feedback system and documentation of stakeholder feedback are still in development. Interviews with Support Service staff, lecturers and Regional Service staff underlined the importance of new ICT systems. Better systems (Peppi, CRM) are planned to be in use in the near future. The audit team underlines the importance of procedures and processes over ICT systems as such.

An evaluation delivered by top management stated that that Laurea is nowadays much more information driven than before. Responding to the 2010 audit, Laurea has also established other than official indicators related with financing to make it easier to evaluate the functioning of organization as well as quality of it. Indicators are linked with strategic aim, as well as those of every unit and even those at an individual level. The transformation process of the organisation's structure change many routines in both daily activities and quality management procedures. In the interviews, staff reported that the number of developing groups might be too big, but agreed

that none of them were without value. Many forums are needed to evaluate the quality of activities in the new context and to strengthen quality culture. Quality management staff underlined the importance of qualitative discussion forums for the quality system. The audit team recommends that Laurea should evaluate the usefulness of different groups and the workload related to quality system work.

Quality management of the institution's core duties

6.1 Degree education

Laurea UAS quality management procedures appear to function well in relation to their support and advancement of degree education. The procedures are normally available on the QPR, although some of them are still to be written due to the ongoing harmonisation project. Staff are strongly aware of the PDCA philosophy and how it underpins the quality system and most demonstrated ability to produce a consistent view of how it is linked to procedures, development activities and surveys. Clear goals have been set for degree education and a range of measures are in place to ensure the goals are met. The quality system enables feedback to be obtained from a range of sources and this information is used for development purposes. However, with the many types of feedback, a review of the analysis and usage should be considered to ensure effectiveness, particularly as feedback appears to be the main driver for planning degree education. Similarly, qualitative student feedback processes should be examined to ensure systematic capture, collection and documentation, as this may provide further development opportunities. A quality culture is strongly evident across all personnel, which facilitates a development driven approach for acting on feedback.

*The quality management of degree education is at a **developing** stage.*

The objectives for degree education

According to the audit material of Laurea UAS, the main goal for degree education is “As learners, we are different, as humans, unique” which underlines the fact that Laurea is a choice for various stages of a lifelong journey, and a set of performance indicators have been identified to support this goal. The Board of Directors confirmed that the performance measures fulfilled strategic needs and were aligned to Government criteria especially associated with funding, although they noted that qualitative data concerning quality was also important.

The Education and Regional Services Units (ERSUs) are responsible for degree education, while Development Unit (Education and Regional Development) is responsible for strategic steering of teaching and regional services; process quality and uniformity; the joint building of future competence; internationalisation of education; virtual education; and the information and publishing services for education and RDI in Laurea UAS.

OFP for every ERSU

The Operating and Financial Plans (OFP) contain performance metrics and results and are the link between the strategy and activities, with an OFP existing for Laurea UAS and for each of the ERSUs. Individuals are set targets in development discussions in accordance with HR processes. The audit team found awareness of the UAS-level goals and the identification of individual goals against the organisational metrics. Degree education staff were found to be aware of the metrics and goals at a course level. There appears to be strong vertical connections and alignment of the goals.

However, the audit team noticed that examination of the ERSU OFPs has revealed inconsistencies. For example, in Unit W (Espoo) the OFP has a clear section on "degrees, progress in studies and Learning by Developing" in which targets on credits, the number of foreign students, and the increased number of study paths are referenced. Unit C (Hyvinkää, Lohja and Porvoo) has this section yet includes details about other targets, for example, credits obtained through Summer Studies. However Unit E (Vantaa) OFP does not have such a section, and finding data about the targets and how they relate to actions is more difficult. The audit team felt that the Strategy Implementation Matrix contained in each OFP is a useful management tool. During the audit, it was suggested that a common approach to the OFP structure and content would facilitate comparisons, performance benchmarking and the sharing of best practices between Units. This was agreed by Laurea to be an opportunity for further investigation and welcomed by the audit team.

Functioning of the quality management procedures

The quality management system is represented by the PDCA cycle. In the interviews, all the staff were aware of the PDCA and could link activities to it from the view point of their own work. Key activities and process descriptions are contained in the QPR portal, although some procedures are still to be written. These descriptions are viewed by Laurea as a tool to harmonise practices and ensure consistent quality. However, not all staff were fully aware of the procedures, and they could not be consistently aligned to the PDCA, despite knowing they could be found on the QPR. According the self-evaluation report, one area in need of development is the quality management practices for the virtual education. The audit documentation noted that Laurea needs to ensure the procedures are fully implemented and staff are familiar with processes. This observation is supported by the audit team.

Curriculum are being harmonised

According to the self-evaluation report, a Curriculum Review was carried out in 2012 by an international evaluation group, and the curricula were evaluated in FUAS cooperation as a mid-term assessment of this review in 2014. Next year, the evaluation focused on general competences in the curricula, and the curriculum implementation was evaluated in autumn 2015.

In 2014, a process to harmonise the practices of degree education was launched in Laurea UAS. This process is clearly still a work in progress, as the audit found personnel could describe activities and working groups to support the harmonisation of the curriculum in degree programmes. For example, the degree coordinator network started in 2015 in each campus, in order to harmonise the content of the degrees by working with the module coordinators. The Development Manager is responsible for ensuring that harmonisation occurs and also for developing quality in their own degree programme. There is a Development Managers Group and a Strategic Pedagogic Development Group, which support the advancement of development activities. All staff members seem to be involved in the development work around harmonisation, particularly degree coordinators and the education development group. The education development group meets a couple of times a term and then subgroups are arranged by discipline to do the work. Every curriculum and every degree is in the process of being harmonised. Entrepreneurship is being embedded and mobility added. The completion of the harmonisation work is scheduled for the end of summer 2016. Nursing teaching staff noted that the harmonising project was not yet finished.

The planning of education and associated processes to enhance its development were evidenced in a range of activities. For example, in the interviews, Service Innovation and Design staff discussed their performance goals and how they were addressing them. An example of this is in an effort to improve the number of completed degrees, staff are supporting and motivating students during their thesis. The UAS staff varied in their ability to link their development activities to the PDCA logic but noted in the interviews that the processes used are on the QPR and stated that development workbooks captured the activities.

The audit team found that there was significant development in relation to degree education, which was linked to the feedback systems, and carried out in accordance with the procedures, thus enabling goals to be achieved.

Information produced by the quality system

The quality system contains a range of mechanisms for collecting information about degree education to drive developments. These mechanisms operate on a defined regular basis and for various stakeholders. Many feedback surveys exist including: Quality of Education survey, Well-Being survey, Graduate feedback survey, students about to graduate survey, study unit surveys, stakeholder surveys and feedback from the region (including working life partners). Feedback is also obtained from formal boards such as the international advisory board and the alumni advisory board. The procedures for collecting feedback are systematic and established; the audit team found staff to be aware of the many mechanisms and surveys.

Laurea believes the improvement in the performance indicators provides evidence of the effect of quality work. The data collection and feedback methods are clearly documented and the cycle of the activities to support their implementation is evidenced. Similarly, the responsibilities for acting on the results is specified, for example, module coordinators check feedback within the module. However, there does not appear to be any evaluation of the effectiveness of actions. Laurea documentation noted that systematic feedback processing had remained at a basic report level and could have been subjected to more in-depth analysis, synthesis and summarisation, and comparisons against FUAS partners in particular could provide an opportunity to identify good practices. The audit team agrees that the systematic review of feedback and the usage of the data is necessary to better enhance the quality system and to facilitate the closing of the quality loop.

Students expected to respond to at least 10 questionnaires a year

The SoleOPS system systematically issues study unit evaluations to all students on the unit and requests feedback. The teacher acts on the feedback, making entries in either the Development Workbook, memos or on a self-evaluation form, and then documents the response in SoleOps. Feedback and development measures are described to the students either at the end of a unit or at the beginning of the next running of the unit following implementation. However, this timing means students do not see the impact of their feedback. On average, students are expected to complete at least 10 feedback questionnaires a year and provide qualitative verbal (formal and informal) feedback at any point. However, survey response rates were found to be very low. According to the interviews, the students are experiencing evaluation fatigue which – combined with the inability to directly see the impact of their comments – contributes to poor survey engagement.

Students and staff believe that formal surveys should be easier to engage with and suggestions include: scheduling them to take place during the final class and before holiday or exam periods, by using a PC room, and collecting feedback earlier in the unit and implementing changes during their delivery. The students suggested that questions should be more specific and related to the course; the Laurea audit documentation identified a need for teachers to create their own questions, which the audit team supports. The audit team notes the actions to increase the response rates (including the use of Touchpads and the future introduction of the Peppi IT system) and suggests that the quantity of student surveys could be reduced, the timing of feedback collection and the provision of dedicated time, the suggestions which emerged in the audit interviews, should be considered. In addition, the systematic capture, collection and documentation of qualitative student feedback (anonymously) represents an opportunity to formally collect rich data to use for development purposes. The audit team recommends that Laurea ensure feedback is being effectively used and that students can quickly see the impact. Improvements made according to the feedback should also be used in a wider context than within the boundaries of a specific course, which in turn would further motivate students to contribute to the surveys.

Many development activities in Laurea are driven by feedback, for example: the graduating student survey identified the need for more internationalisation in the curriculum and increasing mobility has been included in the curriculum changes; more thesis support was a common feedback request and guidance procedures and a thesis camp has been developed. The audit team found many

examples illustrating how feedback was used for developing degree education and suggests Laurea ensure these are applied across campuses where appropriate in order to maximise the impact of development opportunities through the systematic and effective use of feedback.

Participation in quality work

Laurea UAS believes “quality work comprises discussions, doing things together and student-centricity”. The Quality Handbook identified a range of actors involved in quality work in degree education and evaluation processes. However, the audit team found that the roles and responsibilities of the actors should be clearer.

Laurea considers student involvement in development work to be highly important and involves them in development groups. According to the Quality Handbook, student representatives for the various development groups are elected by the Laureamko student union. The audit team found that few of the interviewed students had been directly involved in development projects, although those that had felt they made a valuable contribution and their views were listened to. Most of the students lacked awareness of their peers’ involvement, and knowledge was limited to generic examples concerning Laurea2020 discussions. The majority of students felt their involvement in quality work was to provide feedback. Students were generally pleased with Laurea’s reactions. Students were aware that they could give feedback direct to the teacher, via a Laureamko representative, submit an opinion in online or see their tutor-teacher if they were not happy with a teacher.

Management and teachers described working with Laureamko systematically around the PDCA cycle and process descriptions, training new student members and developing activities. However, Laureamko involvement is less visible more generally amongst students and particularly for mature/master’s students who felt that their role was not fully represented. Given that the student union is presented with many ways of participating in the development of Laurea, the audit team felt that Laureamko could adopt a stronger role to support the quality system.

At Laurea, quality management and improvement are part of every employee’s daily tasks, and contrary to the self-evaluation report, the audit team found a very strong staff culture and positive attitude towards quality work that ensured feedback was acted on and a development-driven nature existed.

Time reserved for development

A commendable strength is the established practice of working time set aside specifically for teaching staff to participate in development work (200 hours/teacher/year from 1600 available). An additional 20 hours are allocated for teaching staff to take part in the mandatory Pedagogical programme to support their own development. Staff could discuss development activities in which they have engaged, such as the harmonisation project and other developments such as providing more guidance for LbD projects. It was generally felt that the workload associated with quality management is acceptable, and although it can be challenging to organise everything and the process itself can be resource intensive, the attitude was that obtaining and acting on feedback is important.

External stakeholders were found to be involved in quality work and especially in the curriculum review process. The alumni advisory board informs education development and the findings from the graduate survey are considered in development activities. The audit team agreed that external stakeholder participation was a positive contribution to degree education quality work and a strength of the quality management system, although Laurea should ensure the systematic use of the feedback received from these stakeholders.

Support Services key to degree education

According to the self-evaluation report, the support services and the service environment of Laurea UAS have been developed together with end users, with the aim of providing equal services of a high quality on Laurea's campuses and online.

There are a number of support services related to degree education. The Student Affairs Office, which is part of the student affairs administration services, has sought to develop uniform practices, service processes and cooperation between actors on the seven campuses. Process descriptions and operating instructions play a key role, and the harmonisation and documentation of these processes is a current project to ensure consistency. The Development Unit (Education and Regional Development), under the leadership of the Vice President, is responsible for most of the process descriptions and instructions relating to education. In addition, they are responsible for the strategic steering of education operations, along with using data to develop education. Other units include the DigiTeam – a new support service that is developing virtual education - information and publishing services, IT services and international services. According to the self-evaluation report, the library services are an elemental part of the education process. The support services are key to ensuring that the “Service promise” is kept and that the strategy is implemented. Support services have been developed with the end users and feedback from a project that identified the student's requirements and opportunities for improvement, to enable a student-centric service. Laurea aims to ensure high quality services on campus and online.

Although the audit documentation noted that service actors found it difficult to examine their activities from the viewpoint of the education process, this was not observed during the site visit as the actors felt that the new strategy and performance indicators have enabled them to see how Laurea functions, therefore making it easier to identify development work and support educational processes.

Degree education staff work with all the support services and their feedback is sought through a feedback questionnaire every year. The recent survey identified the need for equal treatment and for harmonising terms and conditions in the HR system, which has been implemented. Staff felt that they work closely with the library around module planning and receive help and support from IT Services. The Student Affairs Office was noted as being very helpful and part of the education team. The International Office “mobility window” project strongly encouraged student exchange. Overall, degree education staff were positive about support services and the audit team considers this strength may be due to support staff receiving and acting on feedback.

6.2 Samples of degree education

6.2.1 Bachelor's Degree Programme in Nursing

The quality management procedures of the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Nursing constitute a functioning system that supports the planning and implementation of the programme. The environment provided by the UAS is supportive for students and teachers. It also fosters transparency and openness. The process of education is based on the Learning by Developing (LbD) action model, which seeks to achieve competences relevant in working life by integrating practical projects from the working life environment into teaching and learning processes. Nevertheless, participation and feedback should be more vital and systematic, and a more formal communication mode would be beneficial. Feedback collection in the quality management system is based on several forms, but most of them currently do not have a high response rate. Moreover, the potential of student representatives' participation in the planning of educational provision is not fully utilised.

*The quality management of the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Nursing is at a **developing** stage.*

Introduction

The Degree Programme in Nursing is the largest programme in Laurea University of Applied Sciences, on which 19% of students are enrolled. It is offered on five campuses. The degree (210 ECTS) consists of core competence and complementary competence modules, and it takes on average 3.5 years to complete. An important part of the learning process is the undertaking of workplace driven projects, as the programme has a strong professional profile. Clinical practice that promotes vocational skills last for 2,300 hours (90 ECTS credits). As stated in the Self-Evaluation Report, over the period 2011–2014 the rate of students completing 55 credits in an academic year has shown a steady increase (from 48,1% to 51%), as well as the number of students in the programme in general. There were 1459 students enrolled in the degree programme in 2015.

Quality management related to the planning of educational provision

In the process of planning the programme, high priority is given to consistent quality, uniformity and working life relevance in order to ensure professional competence, as the degree education in nursing is regulated under EU Directive 2013/55/EC. The programme was restructured in 2014 with the support of a national Future of Nursing Education project in order to fulfil the competence and content requirements of the Professional Qualifications Directive for Finnish degree programmes in nursing. It was also a subject of the curriculum review conducted by the Federation of Universities of Applied Sciences (FUAS) (autumn 2014, spring 2015).

The curriculum for the degree programme is publicly available on Laurea's website, where it can be accessed by students as well as external stakeholders. The planning of the curriculum is supported by IT systems such as QPR, where one can find guidelines for planning new studies and designing

and publishing a curriculum. The documents include a description of the principles of curriculum preparation and identify an importance of continuous development of the curricula. The instructions regarding describing and assessing learning outcomes can be found in Intra. The planning of the teaching process and a process of establishing a new curriculum is supported by SoleOPS.

Students are provided with opportunities to working on RDI projects (such as Pumppu, mHealthBooster and Morfeus projects) and increasing their professional competence through clinical practice or development assignments. Students are encouraged to develop their entrepreneurial skills by including development of innovations and entrepreneurship in the curriculum. Those activities result in the creation of a number of start-ups, which are monitored annually.

Learning outcomes are expressed as objectives in a competence-based curriculum. Conditions regulated under EU Directive 2013/55/EC are fulfilled, as well as international comparability (NQF level 6 and EQF level 6 competences as produced by the programme). Intended learning outcomes have been expanded with general working life capabilities of a nurse and nationally-described core competence requirements. Learning outcomes descriptions have been updated based on feedback from students about to graduate who are asked about the working life relevance of their degree.

Due to the strong professional dimension of the programme's profile, the role of the external stakeholders and alumni in the development of the curriculum has been particularly significant. The stakeholders are invited to Laurea to give their comments on the intended changes to the curriculum. The feedback system supports collecting student feedback on study units on a regular basis. However, the response rate has remained low, and senior lecturers are critical about the effectiveness of the system. The quality system does not fully close the quality loop in terms of informing students about the results of the feedback and the actions taken on the basis of their feedback. It happens that teachers inform students about the changes on the basis of the collected feedback, but not systematically. The audit team recommends that the students are better informed about the improvements made according to the feedback information, to further motivate giving feedback.

Quality management related to the implementation of educational provision

One of the values of the Degree Programme in Nursing is student-centered learning. Students are provided with a variety of teaching methods with an emphasis on: working in groups and Learning by Developing (LbD) model, which aims at creating an inspiring, innovative, creative and research-orientated learning environment based on encounters with working life. The competences are gained through research and development projects and various practical activities in workshops, simulation classes, at hospitals (e.g. the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa, HUS), in companies and in patients' organisations. As stated in the curriculum, there are flexible possibilities to build up competence, such as selecting core competence studies offered on Laurea's different campuses, selecting complementary competence modules that support professional goals in Laurea's various campuses, selecting English studies, selecting online studies that give more flexibility in the study schedules. Teaching and learning processes are supported by IT tools. However, some of the interviewees mentioned that the systems could be updated and further

developed by adding new features that support sharing the materials. The audit team recommends to further explore the innovative and interactive teaching methods and to encourage all teachers to take advantage of them.

The procedures of prior learning recognition and the model of work-based learning have been developed in order to increasingly recognise students' competence and skills obtained in working life. The methods to assess learning are clearly defined and available in the Intranet. Students experience diverse and versatile assessment methods, e.g. self-evaluation, peer to peer evaluation, oral presentation, participation in class. To maintain consistency, criteria for the thesis and descriptions of the assessment processes have been clarified at UAS level.

The programme motivates teachers to develop their pedagogical skills and provide a good environment for this purpose in terms of clearly setting out procedures and descriptions of the processes (on the Intranet and QPR), reserving time when calculating the workload, launching obligatory programmes for developing pedagogical competence, encouraging teachers to develop their language proficiency (e.g. in a form of financial bonuses) and promoting various training programmes and staff exchanges. The process of teacher development is monitored and discussed at annual development discussions with supervisors and the development manager. In the discussions, the results of the Great Place to Work surveys are also discussed. The audit team recommends maintaining and further evolving the good practice of continuous development of pedagogical skills. On the other hand, student feedback pointed out a need to upgrade the working life experience of some teachers and to update some educational materials. The audit team therefore recommends developing a monitoring system for keeping the content of the lectures and teachers' working life knowledge up-to-date.

Participation in quality work

Laurea UAS sees the need for the participation of different actors in the quality system, thus resulting in the formation of various working groups. The external stakeholders are very well represented in the working groups of the degree programme, especially in curriculum revision. Student representatives are also widely represented in the working groups of the programme, although their role could be more visible to other students. The primary quality management function of average students in the programme is to provide feedback through the formal mechanism of the UAS. Unfortunately, the response rates are fairly low, only the obligatory graduate feedback receives an acceptable share of responses. In practice, the most important channel for students to influence teaching is through informal feedback directly to the teacher. This method seems to work well in this programme, but is naturally dependent on the ambition and motivation of individual teachers.

The key follow-up indicators for the Degree Programme in Nursing have been set up. They focus on the number of applicants to the programme, activities during the programme and graduation to the working life. Data collection is supported by IT tools and the data is stored in QPR. However, there is a need for good analyses and selection of the most relevant information for specific management actions.

6.2.2 Master's Degree Programme in Service Innovation and Design (SID)

The quality management procedures of the Master's Degree Programme in Service Innovation and Design SID constitute a functioning system that supports the planning and implementation of the programme. Teachers value students' prior learning and use it via interactive and participatory teaching methods. Stakeholders and students are welcomed to participate in the quality work and provided opportunities to participate in developing the programme.

*The quality management of the Degree Programme in Service Innovation and Design SID (a Master's degree programme) is at a **developing** stage.*

Introduction

The scope of the Degree Programme in Service Innovation and Design (SID) is 90 ECTS credits and takes on average 1.5 – 2.5 years to complete. The compulsory part (60 ECTS) consists of the following units: Design Thinking (5 ECTS), Service Logic-Based Strategic Management (5 ECTS), New Service Development and Innovative Business Models (5 ECTS), Deep Customer Insights through Ethnographic Research (5 ECTS), Futures Thinking and Foresight Methodologies (5 ECTS), Service Design Process and Methods (5 ECTS), and Thesis: a service development project (30 ECTS). The elective study units (30 ECTS) may be selected from the other Master's programmes at Laurea or its partner universities. As stated in the curriculum description, a central theme of the studies "is that service business requires a distinctive approach to strategy, innovation and design". There were 92 students enrolled in the degree programme in 2015.

Quality management related to the planning of educational provision

The curriculum of the Degree Programme in Service Innovation and Design (SID) has been developed since 2008 in extensive cooperation with international and regional actors, taking into account competences relevant for working life. The role of the Advisory Board for the SID programme has been seen as important in the process of developing the curriculum. It is composed of ten members representing companies in the field of SID, the public sector and research institutes. The curriculum is developed by a group of 15 SID programme teachers and supervisors who meet regularly. The objective of the meetings is the continuous evaluation and development of the curriculum, systematically taking into account feedback from students, teachers and other stakeholders. Participation of the teachers in thematic conferences and seminars is seen as supporting the process of keeping the programme up to date in terms of competence needs.

Oriented to lifelong learning

The process of planning the programme is supported by IT platforms and the adequate procedures and process descriptions are easily accessible to employees. The curriculum is publicly available on Laurea's website. Assurance of the degree's relevance to working life is based on: "development of implementation methods and learning environments, linking working life partnerships with the studies, and active networking".

The Degree Programme in Service Innovation and Design is positively oriented towards lifelong learning. It provides support for students who have completed at least one degree and have working experience of three years. After recognising their competences in the form of a written entrance test, their goals are discussed in a tutoring meeting in the initial stage of the studies. The learning process relies on problem-solving methods, a research orientated approach and continuous communal learning. The organisation of the programme is conducive to full-time work.

Although the feedback from students is one of the bases for elaborating improvements by the programme development group and it is regularly collected, the response rate is fairly low. Therefore, the audit team recommends developing the feedback form in cooperation with students. One of the improvements might be optimising the quantity and quality of the questions. The audit team draws attention to an importance of closing the quality loop with regards to providing students with information about the feedback results, as well as changes and improvements. The role of students as full members and active partners in the working groups is essential in terms of planning and developing the curriculum. Their participation and involvement is indispensable for representing the student point of view, as well as their needs and insight into the student learning experience. While the interviewed students were positive about taking part in such activities, the audit team recommends efficiently involving students in order to fully maximise this potential.

Quality management related to the implementation of educational provision

The programme is underpinned by the Learning by Developing (LbD) model. The teaching favours taking advantage of students' prior learning by interactive and participatory teaching methods. The provision of education is supported by the online learning environment. Student assessment utilises a variety of methods, taking into account different types of learners. The audit team suggests further developing the methods of assessment and consider alternatives, such as self-evaluation, peer evaluation, already utilised elsewhere in Laurea. As mentioned by interviewees, there is also a need for development of the guidance process related to theses.

The programme provides an environment in which teachers are supported and motivated to develop their competence and pedagogical skills in cooperation with external experts. The teacher competence development progress is monitored, and together with student feedback is discussed at annual development meetings with their supervisors. For better integration between the provision of education and RDI, the Master's degree programmes have been centralised in the RDI

Development Unit. There is room for improvement in supporting, resourcing and encouraging students to be more actively involved in research activities, as well as developing the right quality management procedures for this purpose.

Participation in quality work

The programme has many mechanisms and quality procedures for supporting the participation of various stakeholders in the quality system in the form of giving feedback or active participation in the working groups. Also, according to the interviews, the interaction between students and staff works extremely well. Nevertheless, some aspects could be improved. Different ways of collecting feedback have been applied, e.g. study unit feedback, quality of education feedback, graduation survey, from stakeholders (on LbD), LbD survey and alumni feedback. However, most of these (apart from feedback from students about to graduate, which is obligatory) have low response rates.

KPIs have been commonly introduced for Master's degree programmes and targets have been set for several indicators: the number of students having completed a degree, the attraction of the programme, student feedback, graduation rate, RDI credits obtained, programme impact. The targets are in line with targets specified in the Operating and Financial Plan of the RDI Development Unit. The performance is monitored and analysed on an annual basis. Subsequently, the results form the basis of development discussions between teachers responsible for degree programmes, the director responsible for the Master's degree programmes and the education planner. Further development is needed in this regard in order to improve the system's ability to provide more specific and comprehensive data about overall performance.

Overall, the quality of education at the SID programme is managed well. Students and stakeholders are provided with opportunities to take part in the planning and developing of the programme, and the quality management procedures are functioning well.

6.2.3 Bachelor's Degree Programme in Social Services (Hyvinkää campus)

A vivid quality culture and personal commitment was perceptible for the audit team during the visit at Hyvinkää campus. Thanks to this, the Degree Programme in Social Services is continuously improved on the basis of feedback. However, the well-functioning quality work is not entirely based on Laurea's or the programme's quality system, but rather on qualitative feedback exchanges that have evolved over time. This functioning, but unsystematic approach for quality management bears the risk of inefficiency and "brain-drain" for quality matters if personnel leave. The audit team strongly recommends using this very good basis for further implementing systematic quality management activities at Hyvinkää, and to think about tools and procedures that better fit the needs and culture of the programme.

*The quality management of Bachelor's Degree Programme in Social Services (Hyvinkää campus) is at a **developing** stage.*

Introduction

Laurea University of Applied Sciences educates Bachelors of Social Services on three campuses: Hyvinkää, Tikkurila and Otaniemi. The share of social services students out of all students at Laurea is 13.4%. This degree programme has been offered in Hyvinkää since 2008. In December 2015, a decision was made in Laurea to also offer the Degree Programme in Social Services on the campuses of Porvoo and Lohja in 2017. Responsibility for launching this programme was assigned to the Social Services programme in Hyvinkää.

The core competence in the curriculum for the Bachelor of Social Services programme at Laurea is based on degree competences that were identified at national level in the network of universities of applied sciences of the social services sector. The scope of the core competences in the Bachelor of Social Services programme at Laurea is 150 ECTS credits in total. The five core competence modules comprise 30 credits each. Additionally, the students can select courses to an extent of 60 credits from four subject areas of social services. There were 241 students enrolled in the degree programme in 2015.

For students interested in becoming preschool teachers, the choice of 60 credits in the area of early childhood education and care is obligatory.

Quality management related to the planning of educational provision

The Degree Programme in Social Services - as with all study programmes at Laurea University of Applied Sciences - underwent a curriculum reform in 2014, which was prompted by the changing demands of the working life. Representatives of all campuses offering degree programmes in Social Sciences – as well as working life representatives – were involved in this process. This process of harmonisation of the curricula of Social Services programmes at

different Laurea campuses still is going on. As interviewees reported during the on-site visit, the harmonisation process is simultaneously taking place with other change processes (as was the case with the development of the Laurea2020 strategy) alongside the implementation of the programme.

A continuous quality process of educational planning in the field of Social Sciences at all three Laurea campuses is assured by a group comprising degree coordinators and development managers from all Laurea campuses and the central development manager at Laurea level. This group's task is to monitor the curricula of the Social Services degree programmes against the background of external (working life) demands and internal feedback. The composition and tasks of this "curriculum development group" appear sensible to the audit team. Students are represented in this group, and reported during the interviews that they believe they have a strong voice in planning and improving curricula. The results of the national evaluation of education survey 2013 were used as background information for planning the early childhood education and care area of the Degree Programme Social Services.

The outcomes of the programme are described in the form of expected learning outcomes of the students. Based on Bloom's taxonomy, expected learning outcomes are formulated in action verbs ranging from basic competences to higher-ranking competence levels. Thus, the learner's competences can also be assessed on the basis of Bloom's taxonomy (Self-Evaluation Report, 1.2, p.2). The presence of Laurea's didactical concept "Learning by Developing" was perceptible during all interviews and site-visits (of group-working rooms) during the audit. The concept was reported to be very much appreciated by the students. The students – as well as job market representatives – present during the audit emphasised the job market relevance of the programme, which is fostered by the LbD-model. Still, according to the interviews, the connection of LbD-projects to RDI-initiatives is fairly thin. Some students reported missing a stronger theoretical foundation for the practical skills they acquire in the programme. Therefore, the audit team recommends an even more thorough briefing of students about the concept of LbD, which is not geared towards theoretical knowledge acquisition in the first place.

Quality management related to the implementation of educational provision

The Degree Programme in Social Services Hyvinkää outlines various teaching methods in its self-evaluation report. New teachers are given training in the Learning by Developing methodology, which results in many project studies for the students. In addition, online studies, workshops and simulations are utilised. In student assessment, self and peer assessment methods are incorporated, where they provide each other feedback on their perceived strengths and development areas. There are several tools for collecting information for the improvement of educational provision used at Laurea and in the B.A. Social Services.

It was stated in the Self-Evaluation Report that results from these tools are reflected on a regular basis, and measures for improvement are deduced. If necessary, feedback from the SoleOPs system can also be escalated to Laurea's Pedagogical Development Team for discussion. Effectively, reflection of the results from the SoleOPs system can only generate very little outcome due to

the fact that the audit team learned that the response rates of surveys are very low in the Degree Programme from the self-evaluation report and during the on-site visit. Students reported that the questionnaires were not tailored to their specific teaching units and thus are not fully relevant for them. Since the surveys take place after exams (and thus do not provide helpful information for changing the actual study unit), students have the impression that they cannot significantly benefit from participating in the surveys. Additionally, not all teaching staff distribute the results of the surveys to their students. Instead, students and staff emphasised the usefulness of the exchange of qualitative feedback. In this, they highlighted the well-established dialogue-based feedback and quality culture in the programme. Qualitative feedback given on the basis of one particular study unit was reported to also have an influence on the improvement of other study units; e.g. video taping to analyse teaching methods of kindergarten teachers or the implementation of learning portfolios was adopted by other study units as well.

Participation in quality work

In the Degree Programme, a management meeting takes place each week, where matters of quality management are also discussed. Senior lecturers, the programme coordinator and students participate in these meetings. In order to assure the presence of students, an additional student representative was recently appointed. The students perceive themselves as being full members of the management team who are able and encouraged to discuss matters on equal footing with teachers and the degree coordinator. In this, they feel well-supported by Laureamko's guide for student representatives. A member of the student union is present in the degree teams, where - amongst others - the feedback of students about to graduate is discussed. The student representative also passes on feedback from her/his fellow students.

External stakeholders not only participated in the curriculum reform in 2014, but are also involved in the framework of working life projects, which are a constituent part of the B.A. Social Services along the lines of Laurea's LbD-model. Here, external stakeholders help to provide quality education by defining the objectives, timeframe and methods of the development projects in close contact with the degree coordinators. There is an evaluative discussion after the closure of each LbD project, which was reported to be helpful to improve following projects by students, teachers and the working life representative present at the audit.

All in all, quality management of the Degree Programme in Social Services works quite well. There are many quality management procedures that function as intended. The student feedback system is not fully functional, however, but it is compensated partly by the personal commitment of teachers and students and their vivid feedback culture. This does bear the risk of inefficient quality work and - in case of personnel fluctuation - a "brain drain" in the field of quality management.

6.3 Research, development and innovation activities

Laurea has recently dramatically reorganised its research, development and innovation activities to pursue a larger share of the external competitive RDI funding. However, the UAS possesses established and functional procedures for developing and maintaining the quality of its RDI activities. The staff and external stakeholders are well-integrated into the quality management of the activities. The challenge appears to be sharing the best practices identified and ensuring that the RDI quality procedures are followed in all projects across all units.

*The quality management of research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities, is at a **developing** stage.*

Functioning of the quality management procedures

The strategic goal of Laurea UAS's applied research is to produce expertise, solutions and new business, promote future wellbeing, security and international competitive advantage. Laurea constructs partnerships to strengthen the competitiveness of the whole Metropolitan area. The Vice-president is responsible for the main processes of RDI, as well as its sub processes as described in the QPR system. Five indicators show level of achievements: the volume of RDI activities (total and international), publications, patents, and study credits attained through RDI activities. Achievements are followed every four months at Management Team meetings as part of the Operating and Financial Plan check. Laurea's aim from the very beginning has been to be an international developer. Laurea UAS has an international advisory board to support their internationalisation, especially in RDI activities. According to the interviews, the role of this International Advisory Board was not clear across every level of the organisation. Laurea should consider ways in which the International Advisory Board could be utilised in more effective ways to support the internationalisation of RDI.

Reorganisation of RDI is a major shift in Laurea's direction

The changes in funding criteria on the UAS sector necessitated increasing the amount of external RDI funding and a subsequent change in organisation. Regional units were considered too small and local to compete for international RDI projects. Therefore, Laurea collected its RDI personnel into one unit and constructed knowledge-based CARD-programs (Centre for Applied Research and Development) and combined them with Master degree programs. In Self-Evaluation Report, CARDS are linked with the Quality system by implementing research policy and guaranteeing the quality of RDI. The intended benefit of bundling research activities in one unit is to more efficiently accumulate RDI expertise and to increase the strategic dimension of RDI activities. The new system has only been in place for a short period, from the beginning of January 2015. The profit unit managers expressed concern, however, that the reorganisation of RDI challenges the integration of RDI and education, which previously was considered Laurea's speciality. Indeed, the students interviewed by the audit team did not express awareness or involvement in Laurea's

externally-funded RDI projects. There is potential to enlarge the number of students working in larger research and development projects, and to integrate them into education. According to interviews, the students would be eager to combine their interests with Laurea projects if there are similarities in themes.

Multitude of RDI quality management tools

Laurea has created solid procedures for managing the quality of its RDI activities. According to the interviews, staff and unit leaders can find all relevant guidelines from the Intranet. For example, the Project manual is an important tool for the quality management of RDI projects. The Project manual includes the Project process, which directs the planning and implementation of an RDI project. Changes in the structure of the new intranet were well received by staff. Now, all relevant UAS level information is in one place (unlike previously), when every profit unit had their own sources of information. At the project level, the most important tool for maintaining the quality of RDI projects is the effective use of steering groups.

At the project level, many systematic steps of quality management can be found: application, assessment, support staff, the project manager's role as a quality manager, the project steering group, and self-evaluation after projects. The plan is to decrease the amount of steps in the future. Project managers write a short report after every project. Project Steering groups are central to the continuous quality management of projects. For working life partners, there are named contact persons in Laurea to guarantee the quality of RDI.

Laurea utilises the Repotronic project management software that stores practically all information on RDI projects and is used by the project groups. The system also creates periodical reports on the development of RDI activities for the management that appear to the audit team to be somewhat underutilised. Monthly quality letters were also seen as a good way to share the quality of RDI activities. Feedback is gathered from the stakeholders of all RDI projects and is utilised when planning new ones.

Together, these quality procedures function well and are able to manage and assure the quality of Laurea's RDI activities. The audit team would, however, welcome a more concentrated effort in sharing good practices in RDI across the UAS. The risk of abandoning RDI-education integration in the new RDI organisation should also be addressed to maintain the quality of both RDI and education activities.

Participation in quality work

Laurea has been active in participating in external evaluations of its RDI activities. Four evaluations have been conducted since 2010: two international evaluations (2010, 2013), one internal evaluation (2012) and a pre-audit evaluation (2015). Specific personnel take care of the quality of project applications. Project managers are supported, Library personnel guarantee new information with principal lecturers involved in research and development activities. Students mostly do not

participate in the quality work of RDI activities. The role of external stakeholders is strong both at strategic and at unit levels. Stakeholders have a great influence on the themes of forthcoming developing tasks. Top management formulates their quality aims on RDI as the “happiness of stakeholders”. The indicator of the quality of collaboration with working life is that partners are satisfied. This shows the importance of the stakeholders of Laurea to its RDI work. Stakeholders emphasised in the interviews that Laurea has a very good knowledge of the region and its needs, and that the Laurea staff are easily approachable (as they are well-known) for new joint projects. The audit team found a strong respect for stakeholders needing a good starting point to develop all activities of Laurea, with the RDI activities in particular.

The project managers (quality actors) defined stakeholder feedback and the RDI-handbook as the main tools for the quality management of RDI. An intention to intensify the quality management of RDI in the future was noted. However, the audit team was presented with a multitude of quality procedures in RDI, which would indicate that the challenge is actually utilising the existing procedures in all projects across all units in a comprehensive fashion.

Quality management of key support services

New RDI projects receive solid support from the UAS: Principal lecturers provide scientific support to project managers, RDI personnel offer aid in writing applications, there are personnel for budgeting and technical support for projects. Unfortunately, the QPR database currently doesn't offer enough information for project managers to utilise in their everyday work.

Laurea UAS is in the early stages of enlarging its external RDI funding volume, and the focus is very much on euros and other measurable indicators of RDI outcomes. External funding and study credits attained in projects are followed on a monthly basis, among other information. When the knowledge-based CARD teams are fully functional, more sophisticated indicators of the quality of RDI should be adopted. The RDI management team would also benefit from the expertise of the quality management personnel, and the audit team would like to suggest their inclusion in the former.

6.4 Societal impact and regional development work

Laurea UAS highlights its role in the regional development in its strategy. The Regional Services Unit takes responsibility of the coordination and improvement of Laurea's societal impact and regional development work, and functionality on quality management procedures. The personnel groups and students of UAS take part in regional development and Learning by development as a pedagogical model supports well the integration of regional development with education and learning. The quality system produces relevant information about the state and progress of regional development through the indicators and regular monitoring processes. Regional development work has been developed during the last few years and the central needs for developing quality procedures further have been identified by Laurea. The key support services, such as library, marketing and communication, have an important role for strengthening the societal impact of the work, and their services could be even more systematically utilised.

*The quality management of societal impact and regional development work is at a **developing** stage.*

Functioning of the quality management procedures

Laurea UAS has set objectives for societal impact and regional development work that align well with the Laurea2020 strategy. Laurea's strategic intent is to be an international developer of well-being and competitiveness of the Helsinki Metropolitan area in 2020. Laurea UAS profiles itself as an actor that develops regional impact; working life orientated education; RDI linked with cluster development; network and business skills and operating models based on them; as well as the well-being sector and well-being entrepreneurship. After all, the most important contribution of Laurea UAS to societal impact and regional development work is to produce labour for the needs of versatile and renewing working life. Both the staff and the external stakeholders emphasised this impact in the audit interviews. However, societal impact and regional development is not a distinct obligation. To ensure that the students graduate with competitive working-life competence, their studies are integrated with working life and regional development projects. Learning by development as an encompassing principle and pedagogical model suitably supports the integration of regional development with education and learning (see more about LbD chapter 7).

The Regional Services Unit was founded in 2014 to take responsibility for the coordination and improvement of Laurea's societal impact and regional development work. The challenge of the Unit is to develop centralised procedures for the quality management of working life collaboration, e.g. partnership management. In addition, the aim has been to more tightly incorporate regional development work and the quality management procedures into the duties of the entire personnel. The audit team was convinced that these development targets have proceeded quite well, and the UAS has recognised and planned central activities for those areas that still need to be improved, e.g the feedback system and project impact evaluation.

Introduction of CRM system to systematise stakeholder relations

Laurea UAS has extensive procedures for collecting feedback from its working life partners, but the process needs to be systematised. Feedback from working life partners is annually collected through surveys and it is possible to follow the trends of partner satisfaction and other feedback. The Regional Services Unit takes care of the feedback process and the management of complaints. The audit team supports the plans that Laurea UAS has made for developing the feedback system towards more flexible and continuous processes. In future, the partnership management model and the partnership data system (CRM) should foster these improvements. Stakeholder feedback is also collected in regional advisory board meetings four times a year. Additionally, FUAS member institutions conduct a survey among external stakeholders in their respective areas every three years. The aim of the survey is to chart FUAS stakeholder perceptions of FUAS member institutions. It was used to gather data on information sources, marketing impact, institution recognisability and image, service and development capacity, and developmental needs and recommendations. It is important to ensure that the timing and frequency of feedback surveys is purposeful regarding the burdening of certain stakeholders.

Open University of applied sciences education is expanding

The Open University of Applied Sciences serves the region by providing opportunities for study to a wider audience than degree students. This function was taken as an object for development in 2014, and responsibility was assigned to the unit operating under the Vice President for Education and Regional Development. Laurea UAS has managed to integrate Open University of Applied Sciences and Open Path Studies into part of the degree education in Laurea UAS, and the same quality practices, i.e. process descriptions in QPR and feedback procedures, are used. The improvements in results indicate that Laurea UAS have made right choices, and as evidence, the targets for credits in Open University of UAS have been exceeded. The number of completed ECTS credits was 1,242 in 2012, increasing to 5000 in 2015.

Continuing education has been an area for development since 2013, and Laurea has set targets for improvement and indicators for monitoring its progress. Turnover is a key indicator. In 2015, responsibilities for continuing education were assigned at Management Team level, and a Development Group was appointed to find solutions for closer coordination and steering of continuing education. At the moment, the share of paid service activities is just under the target level of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The audit team suggests that the optimal share could be also assessed as part of future funding scenarios.

Laurea has identified a need for a common feedback system that would cover all continuing education, instead of only unit-based systems. The audit team suggests that the feedback system of continuing education should be developed as an integrated part of Laurea's feedback systems as a whole, and good methods and practices should be shared more effectively.

Promoting entrepreneurship

Laurea UAS strives for regional impact by promoting growth entrepreneurship in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The Spinno Enterprise Center is a business incubator that serves technology and competence-based companies aiming for fast growth. Laurea UAS uses various indicators for monitoring the effectiveness of Spinno, including the number of Spinno customer companies that take part in growth entrepreneur programmes, networking and training events, and other activities within the innovation ecosystem in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Despite these good measures, it is not clear how Laurea UAS utilises the operations of Spinno for achieving its own strategic intent and how well it is integrated into the quality system of the Laurea UAS.

One strategic goal of Laurea UAS is to be a responsible higher education institution that promotes economically, socially and ecologically sustainable development. UASs have set indicators for economic and social responsibility. An indicator for social responsibility measures the percentage of students that participated in voluntary work during studies. According to the audit interviews, voluntary activities were not widely recognised by the Laurea UAS community. The aspect of ecological sustainability is totally missing in the quality work and indicators. To strengthen societal impact, it would be useful to create a vision of what responsibility really means for education, RDI and the support services, as well the organisation as a whole, and what kind of opportunities it enables in different areas of education and regional development. After that, some real measurable targets could be defined for both ecological and social sustainability.

Evaluation of regional development coming

According to Laurea's own assessment, the regional development work carried out by Laurea UAS has had a high impact. To add to the external validity of assessments, evaluation of regional development as a whole (quantitative and qualitative impact) will be developed by means of the partnership management model and systematic collection of stakeholder feedback. Laurea UAS's plan to evaluate the impact of their regional development work and partnership model more extensively in 2017. As UAS itself states, the more extensive evaluation of the impact of regional development is well in line with Laurea's strategy. FUAS-collaboration could be utilised for designing and conducting evaluation, and the perspective of societal impact of UAS could be included in the evaluation.

One of the urgent targets for development is the systematic model and software for partnership management. The Regional Development Unit is already working towards this end. This new model is meant to define and describe the classification principles and segmentation of partners with different levels of importance. As Laurea has clarified, the purpose of the model is to ensure consistent contacts of a high quality with key partners and to secure correct resource allocation. Key processes describing these aspects have been modelled and saved in the QPR.

Participation in quality work

Laurea has clearly described the roles and involvement of different regional development stakeholders in quality work. The Regional Advisory Boards, the Alumni Delegation, the Alumni Advisory Board and the International Advisory Board of Laurea UAS enable the versatile involvement of stakeholders in the development work. The audit team was convinced that working life partners have been adequately involved in quality work in different phases of PDCA, and they feel that they are well heard across these different phases. The Learning by Developing action model tightly connects the students and the personnel to working life and regional development work (see more chapter 7). Regional development is an inseparable part of the learning, and quality management methods for education should also address regional development and working life collaboration.

Quality management of key support services

Regional development is seen as part of everyone's work in Laurea UAS, and the Regional development unit is responsible for supporting that work. Visibility and awareness of the UAS's working life and regional development services are critical for their success, as well as good collaboration with the current and potential partners. Marketing and communication is responsible for communications with the stakeholders and partners. The societal visibility and contacts with Laurea UAS take place through the website, marketing material and personal contacts. As described above, there are already ongoing development efforts to improve partnership management towards more systematic and effective processes. In the respect of the Open UAS, the division of work has a potential need for clarification: if the coordinators have a key role in quality work in terms of marketing, schedules and the monitoring of feedback of Open UAS, what is the role for the marketing and communications support services?

Societal visibility indicators could be better utilised

The library services use a number of procedures for analysing Laurea's societal visibility through media analysis, but it could be more broadly and systematically used and utilised in assessing and developing Laurea's activities as a higher education institution. It could mean that besides the number of publications, the utilisation of publications will also be monitored, for example by citations, downloads and the readers of online-publications.

The library has its procedures for assessing the usability of their services. An online-survey for library users is conducted every third year by the National Library. Laurea's results are discussed by the library staff with the superior and management teams in the development unit, with the aim of looking for a common opinion on development actions and deciding on further development measures. After the evaluation process, the results and the development actions are communicated via the Intranet. While the response rate of Laurea UAS was only 12, it could be beneficial to use some dialogical and on-demand tools for investigating the needs of the Laurea library users. The Support Services Unit systematically monitors its work. It submits a report that contains real-time actual figures on targets, results and finances every four months.

Regional Services in Learning by Developing Model

Laurea UAS has developed an approach to teaching and learning which consists of projects conducted by students in conjunction with regional organisations (known as working life partners WLP). This approach is known as Learning by Developing (LbD) and is managed primarily by the Regional Services team who work in conjunction with teaching staff. LbD is a core element of the education provision, and as such has quality management procedures and goals to ensure its ongoing development. Although the procedures are clearly evident in Regional Services, clearer transparency and adoption is needed in the degree education units to ensure consistent practices. Regional Services has effectively used information from the quality system to identify opportunities for improvements, such as the need to introduce a CRM, to facilitate the capturing of information around the relationships and interactions with external partners. The stakeholders in the LbD process (WLP, teachers and students) all participate in quality work, although the students perceive feedback as the main form. LbD provides strong links to Laurea values, particularly around regional development and student centricity. In addition, LbD is clearly highly-valued by regional organisations and students alike, and perceived as a key strength of Laurea UAS.

*The quality management of Regional Services in Learning by Developing model is at a **developing** stage.*

7.1 Functioning of the quality management procedures

The objectives for Regional Services in Learning by Developing Model

Laurea UAS has selected Regional Services as part of the Learning by Developing (LbD) action model as the optional audit target. The Regional Services Unit coordinates and develops regional services and development activities. The self-evaluation report identified the advantage of the LbD model as enabling regional development activities to be combined with many types of learning activities, thus facilitating working life development. In this approach, students work with working life partner (WLP) organisations and their representative on a project, whilst supported by a teacher.

One of the seven strategic themes has the goal of “Higher Education Institution integrated with working life” and the Laurea2020 strategy document identifies measures associated with this goal. This strategic goal is complemented by the service promise: “We’re here for you at Laurea”, which advises students they can study in genuine working life projects.

LbD into every learning process

The audit team found that Regional Services enable regional development activities to be integrated into every learning process through supporting degree programme teams and by working with them on LbD projects. The projects enable the outputs from learning and research processes to provide benefits to the region. The service promise is evident through the different actors working together and through the completion of projects that provide value to the community and to society at large. It is clear that LbD is strongly linked to the Laurea UAS values, the service promise, and particularly regional development and student centricity.

Regional Services identify the goal of the LbD projects as the development of students’ skills to help them survive in the real world, and for WLPs, the goal is successful project results. The self-evaluation report identified that better learning and development results are widely accepted goals, indicating goal synergy. These goals are numerically included in the OFPs for each unit, yet each unit described slightly different LbD activities. Strengthening the alignment between the goals of Regional Services and the three Units would enable harmonisation and better understanding of processes, thus facilitating benchmarking and the sharing of improvement opportunities.

Finally, the external stakeholders believed that regional development projects are a key strength of Laurea UAS. Similarly, the interviewed students consistently stated that LbD projects are a positive element of their degree programme studies.

Functioning of the quality management procedures

At Laurea UAS, the operations are described using operating models and process descriptions, and the audit revealed procedures for LbD were available on the QPR portal. Regional Services management believe process documentation is essential for the effective management and consistency of operations in order to avoid failures. The Regional Services staff could demonstrate how their processes and activities connected to the four phases of the PDCA. In addition, these staff also viewed the procedures as critical and essential to the management of projects and development activities. There was a belief that procedures ensure the minimum level of quality is achieved, actions are consistent and workloads are lower.

The self-evaluation report indicated that different models of co-operation with working life partners exist, and that different systems and methods are in place across degree programmes for determining how and where co-operation is documented. The audit findings support these observations; the Regional Services team staff observed many modes of operation, and the degree education staff described different generic processes. It is noted that Laurea has identified the

need for greater transparency, has taken action to review the issues around models of co-operation with WLP and is piloting improvements. The need for a better information management system to support processes and interactions with WLPs is being planned through a CRM system, which is expected later in 2016. The audit team supports Laurea UAS findings and the need to ensure a consistent system, which should be implemented across the degree education units.

A strength of the quality system is the identification of opportunities to develop and improve LbD, including advancing the achievement of goals. For example, an effective practice for assessing development projects is regarded by management as an opportunity for development and learning from their own practices (good and bad). Similarly, Laurea identified issues around a lack of flexibility to engage in LbD projects, so innovations to address them (including new intermediary study opportunities mid-way through the semester, improving the number of opportunities for summertime projects) are being evaluated, to help with the transition from a study unit/curricula focussed mind set to a service provision and regional needs focused approach. Other development opportunities identified by Laurea and recognised by the audit team include the need for a review of project credit ratings and the development of better guidance and improved project development guidelines.

Information produced by the quality system

The responsibility for collection and utilisation of stakeholder feedback lies with the Regional Services Director, with most data coming from the annual Stakeholder survey, on a range of topics such as satisfaction with co-operation and receiving enough information. Information from the graduate survey led to the identification of the need for the automatic collection of feedback from working life representatives. Information is also received from other groups, such as the regional advisory board and alumni board. It seems that the majority of the opportunities for development activities have emerged from feedback as a result of the quality management efforts.

Stakeholder feedback on LbD projects needed

Feedback is received from organisations involved in LbD throughout the life of projects. Audit documentation stated feedback on individual development from WLPs is almost always collected, but its documentation is still inconsistent and verbal feedback is not always documented. Mixed practices were identified, and it was acknowledged that the ability to share (in)effective practices needs developing. There is a need to collect working life feedback on the performance of students in projects in a time-efficient way. The audit also revealed mixed practices across the degree education units for capturing feedback, with the emphasis on verbal and sometimes documented methods, such as the use of meeting memos and the transcript of thesis. Regional Services colleagues stated that feedback sessions are held with all WLPs, and this enables outcomes to be determined and measured. Feedback can be provided at intervals during the projects and always at the end. Therefore, the audit team agrees with the Laurea's own findings that feedback (both oral and written) could be more systematically collected and documented, and recommends that the usefulness of the data is ensured.

7.2 Participation in quality work

The involvement of different parties in the quality work

The Regional Services in the LbD model enables solutions to be developed according to the working life partner requirements, enabling Laurea UAS to create appropriate services to meet these needs and therefore provide partner-centric quality.

There appears to be good communication channels with the WLPs to manage expectations throughout the project, including regular interactions with teaching staff. WLPs are believed to work well with Laurea staff and students, although they felt clear roles for each party would assist the process. Although the self-evaluation report noted that WLPs did not visualise themselves as actors in Laurea's quality system, the audit found that WLPs believed the management of projects, meetings and discussions are integrated with the quality system. It was clear that these stakeholders are familiar with the LbD project activities, for which they believe Laurea has a good reputation, are easy to approach and engage in projects together and as such they would like to be advised of more opportunities. The stakeholders are happy to put in effort, as the projects deliver very good results and outcomes. Stakeholders considered the workload to be about right, noting that it depends on having a well-defined project and lecturer support. Beyond projects, external stakeholders could describe interaction with the strategy evaluation, reading quality reports and contributing to quality processes through advisory boards.

Students are motivated and committed to LbD

Students are the key to ensuring quality work and are placed at the centre of the project; which is checked to ensure the skills and competence align with the curriculum and the students are given autonomy to reach their goals. Whilst it is acknowledged that the results will vary depending on the student's motivation, working life partners are positive about the quality of the development work. The WLPs agreed that the quality varies, however the majority of students and projects are very good. The WLPs try to motivate students and advise them on how their work will be beneficial to the organisation. The general belief amongst staff, across the degree education units, was that the students are motivated, committed and take responsibility for the project, with the teacher taking a mentoring role. Any issues are raised with the teacher straight away and examples indicated that they were dealt with immediately.

Students identify involvement in quality work as providing and receiving feedback and were aware of questionnaires, feedback forms and the ability to contact the teacher about any issues. Providing positive feedback was identified as easy, however, critical comments were identified as difficult to provide and it was necessary to wait for SoleOPs to be opened by the teacher. Students felt their concerns were considered but noted inconsistent practices regarding feedback on the changes/developments made and the inconsistent use of Optima. Students did not recognise quality work in LbD beyond feedback and these findings should be considered alongside those identified

in chapter 6. In addition, a minority of students identified that they needed more lectures and theoretical input, so the audit team suggests that Laurea emphasise the pedagogic theory and practice underpinning LbD.

Staff at Laurea UAS are development orientated, want to do their best and improve as demonstrated by the visible culture and the range of activities articulated during the audit. Development is a natural part of their job. It is not associated with doing quality work, even though quality is clearly part of their everyday work.

A team approach, aligned to the values, was apparent between the different actors in LbD projects who generally thought that workloads are appropriate for all stakeholders when a project is well organised, documented and meets customer needs.

The quality system as a whole

The quality system of Laurea UAS covers all the main functions of the higher education institution. There is ample evidence of the system producing information that is utilised to develop the activities of Laurea. The system is based on a very vivid quality culture and strong commitment of the staff to continuous development of their work. Most of the quality management procedures function well, while a systematisation of the different activities as well as a clarification of roles and leadership for revision and innovation would be needed. Laurea's quality management activities are closely connected to the institution's strategic goals and the strategy itself is implemented in the everyday activities of the institution in an exemplary way. The necessary information is available on the impressive QPR portal, the planned revision of which promises to further increase the value of its data.

*The quality system as a whole is at a **developing** stage.*

8.1 Comprehensiveness and impact of the quality system

The Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle is in use at every level of Laurea UAS and gives a common language and understanding of the annual tasks of developing all activities across the institution. The audit team found that quality and top managers use the PDCA cycle in their discussions. The staff from different levels of organisation are very familiar with its logic as well, although some units implement the quality procedures more comprehensively than others.

The planning of education and associated processes to enhance its development were presented in a range of activities. The quality system contains a range of mechanisms for collecting information about the degree education, which are then used to drive developments. These mechanisms operate on a defined regular basis and for various stakeholders. The procedures for collecting feedback are systematic and established: the audit team found that staff were aware of the many mechanisms and surveys. Since Laurea has implemented a high number of tools for the collection of information and the response rate of some surveys is very low, the audit team strongly recommends reducing

and integrating the different mechanisms for feedback collection. The quality culture at Laurea forms a good basis for systematising quality management activities and for developing procedures that fit the needs and culture of the organisation even better.

The audit team found that quality management works well in degree programmes and was presented with many examples quality system impacting everyday practices. The audit team agrees that external stakeholders and alumni (as well as students) have good possibilities to contribute towards curriculum development. Strong evidence can be seen in the reorganisation of Laurea to answer the needs of the region, as well as performance levels in the RDI and education provision.

The Quality Handbook identified a range of quality actors involved in quality work in degree education, specifically: development managers, staff members, students, degree programme coordinators, module coordinators, and the teachers in charge of a study unit. There are also a number of support services contributing to the degree education activities. Since the interviewed staff reported that they prefer using Laurea's intranet, where even more detailed information can be found, the UAS should re-think whether they really need a printed version of the Handbook. It did not become entirely clear for the audit team who or which position at Laurea UAS is responsible for overseeing the 'big picture' of quality system development. Furthermore, the division of tasks and responsibilities among the quality manager and the director of data gathering and quality management appears somewhat inefficient in terms of overlap. The audit team strongly urges Laurea to establish clear leadership over the development and direction of the quality system to ensure its fitness for purpose.

Key activities and process descriptions are contained in the QPR portal. In 2014, a process to harmonise the practices of degree education was launched, and the instructions related to these processes are in Intra with links to Laurea QPR. All staff members seem to be involved in the development work around harmonisation, particularly degree coordinators and the education development group.

The Operating and Financial Plans (OFP) are the link between the strategy and activities, with an OFP existing for Laurea UAS and for each of the ERSUs. The OFPs contain performance metrics and results, supported by qualitative descriptions and are reviewed every four months. Individuals are set targets in development discussions in accordance with HR processes. The audit team found awareness of the Laurea's goals and the identification of individual as well as course level goals against the organisational metrics. The audit team found that there was significant development of degree education, which was linked to the feedback systems, and carried out in accordance with the procedures, thus enabling goals to be achieved. For even further improvement, the OFPs should be further aligned to the strategic goals and restructured.

RDI work was reorganised fairly recently to increase the volume and impact of activities. The new way to organize RDI activities has been working only a short period, so no clear long-term evidence on the functioning of quality management of RDI could be found. However, Laurea has procedures and responsibilities in place to guarantee the quality of RDI activities in a changing situation. Larger projects are collected into a specialised unit with a coordination and supportive

function. Project managers are mostly located into profit units while they get support from the RDI unit. Smaller projects are linked with education – in line with Laurea's pedagogical Learning by Developing model. Laurea's LbD ideology was obviously seen in the profit units, as well as in the quality culture of staff members.

RDI projects are controlled by many quality management procedures. A project handbook guides through the process, which have steps for application, project work, as well as afterward reporting. For working life partners there are named contact persons in Laurea to facilitate the close contacts. Specific personnel take care of the quality of project applications. Project managers are supported in writing applications and library personnel provide support for principal lecturers involved in research and development activities. Laurea underpins the role of Steering groups of the projects in the continuous quality management of projects. Project managers write a short evaluative report after every project. Staff and students reported that they have good knowledge of the projects going on.

Quality management of regional development activities functions well. The activities are strongly supported by the Learning by Developing model, which aims at integrating learning and RDI activities. The activities are further supported by the recent formation of a Regional Services Unit to coordinate and improve Laurea's societal impact and regional development. Feedback from the regional stakeholders and advisory boards is gathered and utilised in a fairly systematic way. The audit team expects the new partnership model and data system (CRM) to foster these improvements.

Because of the new Intranet, all relevant Laurea level information is in one place in comparison with the earlier Intra, in which every profit unit had their one source of information. At the unit level, many staff are working daily with companies and stakeholders. At the project level, steering groups were seen the most important tools to keep the quality of the projects high. During the audit visit, a task force presented the plans for revising the QPR portal. The audit team strongly supports the plans and encourages the task-force to keep up the good work.

Laurea UAS has extensive procedures for collecting feedback from its working life partners, but the process needs to be more systematised. Feedback from working life partners is collected annually with surveys and it is possible to follow the trends of partner satisfaction and other feedback. The Regional Services Unit takes care of the feedback process and the management of complaints. The audit team supports the plans that Laurea UAS has made for developing the feedback system towards more flexible and continuous processes. In the future, the partnership management model and the partnership data system should enable these improvements. Stakeholder feedback is also collected in regional advisory board meetings four times a year. In addition to that, once every three years, FUAS member institutions conduct a survey among external stakeholders in their respective areas.

8.2 Quality culture

The audit team was convinced that the atmosphere in Laurea is open for free dialogue regarding quality issues. Staff members from every level of Laurea have the possibility to offer his or her contribution towards the development of quality. Open dialogue leads to development. On the other hand, the audit team saw that the Laureamko Student union could make more of the possibilities to influence the activities of Laurea, if they were to adopt a more active stance.

At Laurea, a very vivid quality culture was apparent across all levels during the audit visit. All interviewees demonstrated a very high commitment to quality work and an openness for feedback from different perspectives to improve quality. This atmosphere of openness towards constructive criticism and continuous improvement is fostered by Laurea via different occasions for reflection about quality (e.g. quality newsletter, development days, management meetings, provision of nearly all necessary information on QPR). The quality culture of Laurea seems to be orientated towards Laurea's claim "Together we are stronger"; most of the activities for quality reflection and enhancement are worked on in a number of different working groups, of which students are also a constituent part. During the interviews a number of examples for the impact of quality management activities on different levels was presented.

Laurea's clearly observable quality culture forms a solid foundation for quality management. Although the quality management seems to work well in most areas and on most levels, at times it is not connected to fixed procedures, but based on the personal commitment of teachers and students and their culture of easy interaction. While this culture is commendable, it does bear the risk of being dependent on the attitudes and ambition of individual teachers to be effective.

8.3 The quality system as a whole

In conclusion, it is evident that quality management penetrates all of Laurea's fields and activities. The notion of continuous development is - with only a few exceptions - implied in almost all activities at Laurea. The relationship between quality management activities and strategic management via Operational and Financial Plans is logical and convincing. This connection between strategy and action is supported by Laurea's QPR database, which contains the most crucial information for informed decision-making. The audit team saw the potential to develop QPR into an even better tool through automated gathering and analysis of data. The division of labour on quality work and process descriptions are available for all staff in the QPR and the Intranet. The procedures of quality management form a functioning and unified system. The system produces and utilises many kinds of information: qualitative and quantitative, formal and informal while being related to the strong quality culture. With these functioning procedures and the strong commitment of the staff for continuous development, the audit team was convinced that Laurea University of Applied Sciences is fully able to assure and manage the quality of its activities.

9

Conclusions

9.1 Strengths and good practices of the quality system

Strengths

- Laurea University of Applied Sciences has a very vivid quality culture, which supports the development of activities. There is a strong awareness of the Plan-Do-Check-Act philosophy throughout the organisation.
- The rationale and objectives of the quality policy of Laurea University of Applied Sciences are clearly defined and accessible to all staff members and students, as well as external stakeholders.
- The Operational and Financial Plans (OFPs) is the most important procedure that integrates the quality system of Laurea UAS and the management system at both strategic and operational levels. In the OFPs, the strategy finds its concrete expression and forms a link between management, profit unit and personal level targets, as well as the monitoring of performance and results.
- Strategic intents have been internalised extremely well through inclusive strategy formulation and planning processes. The staff, students and even external stakeholders are well informed about the strategic intentions and their meaning in practice.
- The documentation of quality activities by the means of Laurea QPR is at an advanced level. All interviewed staff reported during the on-site visit that the QPR was a very useful source of information for monitoring and planning. The database combines results from different evaluations and information systems in one application with information of how issues are followed up. The information in Laurea QPR is accessible for the staff and thus well supports operational management at all levels.
- Laurea UAS has constructed strong ties with working life at different levels of the organisation. The objectives for societal impact and regional development work align well and are linked with the strategy.
- Learning by Developing (LbD) model underpins learning experience relevant in working life.

- Teachers are motivated to develop their pedagogical skills and keep their working life knowledge up-to-date by various means. The process is systematically monitored and time is reserved when calculating the workload.
- Laurea's process descriptions and quality procedures are functional, established and easily accessible.

Good practices

- Laurea's overall strategy was developed in a very transparent process, involving staff and students of the UAS. The Laurea2020 strategy formulation process was very participatory, utilising workshops and digital tools, such as Twitter and applications. Students, staff and external stakeholders felt that they could influence the strategic intent. The approach and integration of the staff and students from the beginning has significantly supported the implementation of the strategy and its promises in its later phases.
- Laurea has set indicators for evaluating target achievement in the seven central themes of Laurea2020 strategy, and they are described in the Quality handbook and followed in the OFP and QPR. These indicators cover the intent the strategic themes to various extent from theme to theme.
- Laurea has a comprehensible cascade of the strategic themes, goals, the underlying statements and relevant indicators in place. This depicts an impressively straight-forward operationalisation of strategic goals into graspable key performance indicators, reaching to the level of individual staff members.
- The Learning by Developing model tightly connects the students and the personnel to working life and regional development work. As a practical result, working life partners feel that they have been adequately involved in quality work in different phases of PDCA, and they are well heard at different phases.
- Laurea puts a great deal of effort into and is successful in communication about the quality management of its activities to stakeholders both inside and outside the organisation through many different forms of media.

9.2 Recommendations

- A systematic review of student feedback processes is required. This would include the assessing the capturing, collecting, documenting, analysis and usage of student feedback. Laurea should concentrate on gathering the type of data which benefits it the most and perhaps introduce periodicity to feedback surveys.
- The audit team recommends that Laurea takes stronger ownership in the development of its own quality system as a whole and assess which parts of the quality system perform best and where further efforts are still needed. The FUAS external reviews are useful, but should not replace Laurea's command of its quality system.

- Laurea should re-think the necessity of having a large number of working groups with many members working on similar tasks. Development projects are gathered together well but to improve management (incl. workload, resources) of the huge amount of the projects, it could be useful to view also their resources and timelines. The roles and responsibilities of the different actors in the quality system should be clarified.
- The students' union Laureamko has ample opportunities to take part in the development of education and the quality system. However, the union could make better use of these opportunities and adopt a more active stance to fulfil its role as an important actor in the institution.
- Some of the strategic targets are lacking convincing indicators. Laurea should consider adding some follow-up indicators for measuring long-term impacts of entrepreneurship, e.g. as amount of companies of graduated students; and more ambitious targets for responsibility and sustainability of Laurea UAS as a regional developer, employer and educational institution.
- The audit team encourages Laurea to revise their quality handbook and make it more concrete and usable, going beyond a brochure for advertisement or embed its contents to the Intranet, which the staff already finds accessible.
- A common structure and content for the Education and Regional Services Units' Operational and Financial Plans would enable performance benchmarking between the units and foster stronger sharing of good practices.
- The role of International advisory board should be strengthened so that the board gives more boost for internationalization of Laurea's RDI work.
- Laurea should follow carefully the development of research and development activities in profit units. There is a risk that the potential and enthusiasm of profit unit people couldn't be in use fully if the gap between RDI unit and profit units comes too wide.
- To strengthen societal impact, it would be useful to create a vision of what societal responsibility means for the education, RDI and the support services as well the organization as a whole.

9.3 The audit team's overall assessment

The quality system of Laurea University of Applied Sciences fulfils the FINEEC criteria for the quality system as a whole and for the quality management as it relates to core duties. None of the audit targets are at the absent stage and the quality system as a whole (audit target 6) is at the developing stage.

The audit team proposes to the FINEEC Higher Education Evaluation Committee that Laurea University of Applied Sciences passes the audit.

9.4 Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision

In its meeting on 26 August 2016, the Higher Education Evaluation Committee decided, based on the proposal and report of the audit team, that the quality system of Laurea University of Applied Sciences meets the FINEEC criteria for quality systems as a whole and quality management of the higher education institution's core duties. Laurea University of Applied Sciences has been awarded a quality label that is valid for six years beginning on 26 August 2016.

APPENDIX 1: Table of the audit targets and criteria

TARGETS	CRITERIA		
	Absent	Emerging	Developing
1. Quality policy	<p>The quality policy shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rationale and definition of the quality system's objectives and responsibilities • accessibility of the quality policy to internal and external stakeholders • linking to the institution's overall strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality policy's rationale, objectives and division of responsibilities are at an early stage of development and are only partially defined. • The quality policy is not fully accessible and does not sufficiently take into account the information needs of internal and external stakeholders. • The quality policy is insufficiently linked to the institution's overall strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality policy's rationale, objectives and division of responsibilities are defined in explicit terms and the result of a thorough and wide process. • The quality policy is accessible and actively communicated to all internal and external stakeholders. • The quality policy is an integral part of the institution's overall strategy.

TARGETS

CRITERIA

TARGETS	CRITERIA		
	Absent	Emerging	Advanced
2. Quality system's link with strategic management	<p>The quality system and quality work show an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ability to meet the information needs of strategic and operations management • procedures for the use and communication of quality information • functionality at different organisational levels • division of responsibility • commitment in the execution of roles and responsibilities in the institution's quality work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality system and the information it produces serve only partially the needs of strategic and operations management. • Procedures for the use of and communication of quality information are weak or uneven. • The quality system functions unevenly across the institution. • The division of responsibility is only partially effective, with variable commitment in the execution of roles and responsibilities in the institution's quality work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality system and the information it produces serve strategic and operations management. • Established procedures ensure that the information produced is put to use and communicated systematically within the institution and to external stakeholders. • The system works evenly across different organisational levels and units. • The division of responsibility is effective, and roles and responsibilities in the institution's quality work are executed with commitment. • The institution has well-established and excellent procedures that systematically produce information for strategic needs, and the information is put to systematic and wide use. • The institution has well-established and excellent procedures for communicating information to different personnel groups, students and external stakeholders. Communication of the information is active and up-to-date. • The quality system works effectively across all organisational levels, in a way that adds value to and enhances the quality of the institution's operations. • Managers and members of the community are committed to enhancement and the embedding of a quality culture.

TARGETS

CRITERIA

	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
3. Development of the quality system	<p>The HEI shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> procedures for evaluating or developing the quality system or overall view of the functioning of the quality system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The institution has in place procedures for evaluating and developing the quality system but these procedures may not always be fit for purpose and/or effectively used for the system's further development. Institutional oversight of the functioning of the quality system needs to be strengthened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HEI has in place well-functioning procedures to evaluate and develop the quality system. The institution is able to identify the system's strengths and areas in need of development, and development work is systematic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HEI has well-established and systematic procedures for regularly evaluating and developing the system. The institution is able to efficiently identify the system's strengths and areas in need of development. There is clear evidence of the system's successful development work.
<i>Follow-up section for the HEIs subject to the second audit:</i>	<p>The HEI shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development work following the first audit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the quality system after the first audit has not been systematic or effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the quality system after the first audit has been systematic. The system works better than before. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the first audit, the HEI has systematically improved the functionality and fitness for purpose of the quality system. Special attention has been given to the workload produced by the system. The system has been developed in a successful and effective manner.

The fulfilment of the following criteria is reviewed separately for each core duty and optional audit target:

TARGETS

CRITERIA

	CRITERIA			
	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
<p>4. Quality management of the core duties, including essential services supporting these</p> <p>4a) Degree education</p> <p>4b) Research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities</p> <p>4c) Societal impact and regional development work (incl. social responsibility, continuing education, open university and open university of applied sciences education, as well as paid-services education)</p> <p>4d) Optional audit target</p>	<p>The quality system shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality management procedures used to achieve the goals set for the core duties • participation of the institution's personnel groups, students or external stakeholders in quality work related to the core duties • quality management of essential services supporting the core duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures are in place but insufficiently developed. The procedures do not fully support the achievement of institutional strategic goals set for the core duties. • The information provided by the quality system is as yet insufficient for the development of the core duties. Information use is sporadic and/or information collection is an end in itself. • Personnel groups, students and external stakeholders are only partially involved in quality work. • The quality management of key support services is not functional. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional quality management procedures advance the development of the institution's core duties and the achievement of goals set for the operations. • The quality system produces relevant information for the development of the core duties, and the information is used for this purpose. • Personnel groups and students are involved in quality work. External stakeholders also participate. • The quality management of key support services functions relatively well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI has systematic and well-established quality management procedures that provide excellent support for the development of the institution's core duties and the implementation of its overall strategy. • The institution has systematic and excellent procedures used to produce information for the development of the core duties. There is clear evidence that information is used systematically and successfully. • Personnel groups and students are committed and actively involved in quality work. Special attention has been given to the workload generated by the quality management procedures. External stakeholders are also systematically involved in quality work. • The HEI has systematic and well-established procedures for the quality management of key support services. There is clear evidence that these procedures function well.

The fulfilment of the following criteria is reviewed separately for each degree programme:

TARGETS	CRITERIA			
	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes Planning of the programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricula and their preparation • Intended learning outcomes and their definition • Links between research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities, and education • Lifelong learning • Relevance of degrees to working life. Implementation of the programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching methods and learning environments • Methods used to assess learning • Students' learning and well-being • Teachers' competence and occupational well-being. Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of different personnel groups, students and external stakeholders in quality work related to the degree programme. Effectiveness of quality work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability of key evaluation methods and follow-up indicators and their impact on the achievement of goals. 	<p>The quality system shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality management procedures related to the planning of the programme • quality management procedures related to the implementation of the programme • participation of the institution's personnel groups, students or external stakeholders in the development of the programme or • effectiveness of the quality work related to the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures related to the planning of educational provision are not fully functional and do not provide sufficient support to the planning of the programme. • The quality management procedures related to the implementation of educational provision are not fully functional and do not provide sufficient support to the implementation of the programme. • Personnel groups, students and external stakeholders only partially participate in quality work. • There is little evidence of the effectiveness of the quality work related to the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures related to the planning of educational provision are fully functional and support the planning of the programme. • The quality management procedures related to the implementation of fully functional and support the implementation of the programme. • Personnel groups and students participate in quality work. External stakeholders also participate. • There is evidence that quality work has an enhancement effect on the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures related to the planning of educational provision provide excellent support for the planning of the programme. They are systematic and well-established. • The quality management procedures related to the implementation of educational provision provide excellent support for the implementation of the programme. They are systematic and well-established. • Personnel groups and students participate actively and with commitment in quality work. External stakeholders are also systematically involved. • There is clear evidence of the enhancement effect of the quality work.

TARGETS

CRITERIA

	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
6. The quality system as a whole	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The HEI has only individual and unrelated quality management procedures.• There is no evidence of the procedures' impact on the development of the operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality management procedures do not yet form a functioning and unified system.• The quality system encompasses some of the HEI's core duties but there is little evidence of the system's impact on the development of the core duties.• The institution's quality culture is only just emerging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality management procedures constitute a functioning system.• The quality system covers the essential parts of the core duties of the HEI and provides support for the development of the operations. There is evidence that the system has an impact on the development of the core duties.• The development of the operations is based on an existing quality culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality management procedures form a dynamic and coherent system.• The quality system covers all the core duties of the HEI and provides excellent support for the institution's overall strategy and the development of the operations. There is clear evidence that the system has an impact on the development of the core duties.• The institution has a well-established quality culture, characterised by wide participation, commitment and transparency.

APPENDIX 2. The stages and timetable of the audit process

Agreement negotiation between the HEI and FINHEEC	9 March 2015
Appointment of the audit team	19 October 2015
Submission of the audit material and self-evaluation report	18 December 2015
Information and discussion event at the HEI	29 January 2016
Audit visit	8 - 10 March 2016
Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision on the result	26 August 2016
Publication of the report	September 2016
Concluding seminar	September – October 2016
Follow-up on the development work of the quality system	2019

APPENDIX 3: Programme of the audit visit

Tuesday 8 March 2016	
09.00 - 10.00	Interview of the Top Management
10.15 – 11.15	Thematic interview on Quality management
11.30 – 12.30	Interview of the Laurea UAS Board of Directors
13.15 – 14.15	Interview of Directors of Education and Regional Services units
14.30 – 15.30	Interview of students
15.45 – 16.45	Thematic Interview on Education
Wednesday 9 March 2016	
09.00 – 09.50	Interview of staff of the Degree programme in social services (Hyvinkää)
10.00 – 10.50	Interview of students of the Degree programme in social services (Hyvinkää)
12.00 – 12.50	Interview of staff of the Degree programme in nursing
13.00 – 13.50	Interview of students of the Degree programme in nursing
14.00 – 14.50	Interview of staff of the Master's programme in Service Innovation and Design SID
15.00 – 15.50	Interview of students of the Master's programme in Service Innovation and Design SID
16.00 – 17.00	Interview of external stakeholders
Thursday 10 March 2016	
09.00 – 09.50	Thematic interview on data systems
10.00 – 11.00	Thematic interview on RDI
11.15 – 12.15	Thematic interview on Regional Services as a part of the LbD model
13.00 – 14.00	Interview of the Support services' staff
15.00 – 16.00	Interview and preliminary feedback to the Top Management

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) is an independent, national evaluation agency responsible for the external evaluations of education from early childhood education to higher education in Finland. It implements system and thematic evaluations, learning outcome evaluations and field-specific evaluations. Moreover, FINEEC supports providers of education and training and higher education institutions in matters related to evaluation and quality assurance, as well as advances the evaluation of education.

Audits of the quality systems of higher education institutions have been implemented in Finland in accordance with the principle of enhancement-led evaluation since 2005. The objective of the audits has been to support Finnish institutions in developing quality systems that correspond to the European principles of quality management and to demonstrate that functional and consistent quality management procedures are in place in Finland both in institutions and on the national level. In the audits, institutions are supported in their efforts to reach their strategic objectives and in directing future development activities in order to create a framework for the institutions' continuous development.

This report presents the audit process of Laurea University of Applied Sciences and the results of the audit.

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