



## **Development Report 2016-2017**

The Higher Education Evaluation Unit publishes annually a development report as part of its internal quality management. The report illustrates the various improvements the Unit has done on the basis of the feedback gathered from the evaluations of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and analysed at FINEEC.

This report includes evaluations conducted in 2016-2017 and includes the following audits of quality systems:

- Centria University of Applied Sciences\*
- Diaconia University of Applied Sciences
- Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences
- Häme University of Applied Sciences
- Hanken School of Economics
- Lahti University of Applied Sciences
- Laurea University of Applied Sciences
- Metropolia University of Applied Sciences
- National Defence University
- Saimaa University of Applied Sciences
- University of Eastern Finland
- University of Turku
- Åbo Akademi University\*

The online questionnaires were sent to the HEIs and audit team members after the process.

\* ÅA audit team's responses were included already in the report 2015-2016

\* Only the team's responses from the Centria audit were included in this analysis

### **Utilisation of the feedback**

The staff of the FINEEC Team for Audits analysed the feedback information in a full-day-session in September 2017. The feedback were divided amongst the staff present beforehand so that one person read all of the answers from all audits for a specific question and presented the key findings to the whole group. Another designated person commented and added to the findings to make sure important findings were not left out. Strengths, good practices, new ideas, easy and difficult development issues were raised by the Team. The feedback questionnaires also provide indicator data on the success of the audit processes, which was also

included in the analysis. The most important difficult development issues and new ideas were selected for further scrutiny and changes to the Team for Audit's procedures were made on to tackle the issues.

### Indicators

The feedback questionnaires have many open questions to provide qualitative responses on what worked in the process and how the audits could be improved. These have proved most useful for FINEEC's development purposes. In addition, there are seven statement questions, where the respondent selects the best fitting option from the following options:

- 1 Fully disagree
- 2 Partially disagree
- 3 Partially agree
- 4 Fully agree

The statements for HEIs are:

- The audit report provided us with useful feedback for development.
- FINEEC's audit team performed in a professional manner.
- The chair of the audit team performed in a professional manner.
- FINEEC's project manager communicated well in this audit.
- The timetable of the audit was successful.
- The audit criteria is clear and functional.
- This audit has had a significant impact on the development of our institution.\*
- Higher education institutions are treated equally in FINEEC's evaluations.

\* This statement was included in 2016 for the first time. The intention is to monitor the immediate impact of audit in the institution.

The statements for audit team members are:

- I am satisfied with the audit report produced by my audit team.
- Project manager(s) of the audit team acted in a professional manner.
- The overall scheduling of the audit was successful.
- The audit criteria is clear and functional.
- Higher education institutions are treated equally in FINEEC's evaluations.
- Would you be interested in being part of FINEEC audit teams in the future? (yes/no)

A response of fully disagree resulted in a score of 1 and fully agree in 4. The response rate from HEIs was 92 % and 74 % from the audit team members.

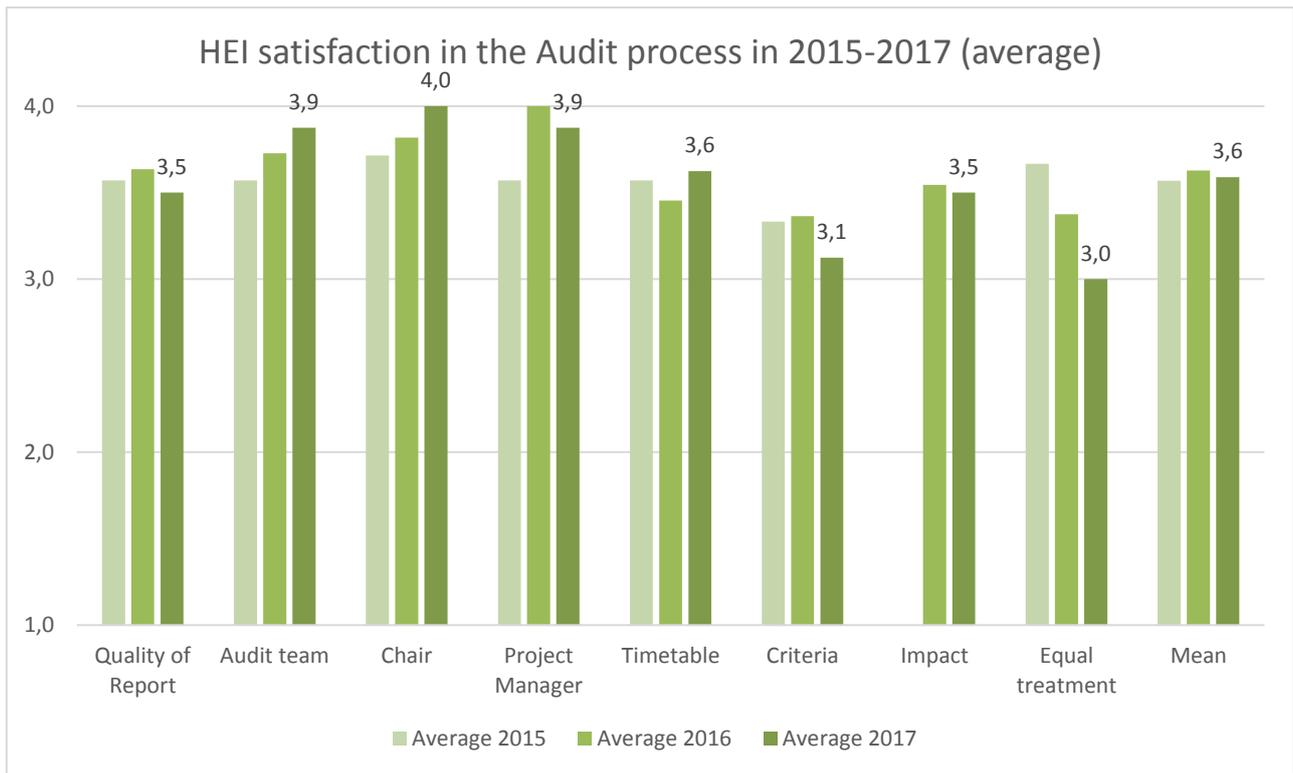


Figure 1: HEI satisfaction in the Audit process in 2015-2017.

Figure 1 illustrates the Likert-scale responses from the Finnish HEIs that took part in FINEEC’s audits in 2015-2017. The themes in question (e.g. Quality of Report) correspond to the statements of the feedback questionnaire. The overall satisfaction is very high as all means are between “Fully agree” and “Partially agree” and the level of satisfaction is rather stable with the mean staying around 3.6, although there has been a visible increase in satisfaction on the audit teams and their chairs since 2015. The open answers do not give a clear reason for the decline regarding the statement on equal treatment, although many respondents stated that given the uniqueness of each audit case, it is hard to assess the statement. Around one third of both the institutions and the audit team members replied “cannot say” to the statement.

Figure 2 presents the level of audit team members’ satisfaction to the audit process. The auditors themselves have constantly been very content in the quality of their report and with FINEEC project managers. The audit schedule has previously been considered demanding but a positive development can be noted regarding this statement. The audit criteria were not considered as clear and functional as they could be, with a few respondents already looking positively towards the upcoming changes to the audit criteria for the third round of audits. Overall, the audit teams’ satisfaction is very high, closer to “Fully agree” than “Partially agree”. This is also reflected in the fact that 91 % of the audit team members stated that they would be willing to participate in another audit.

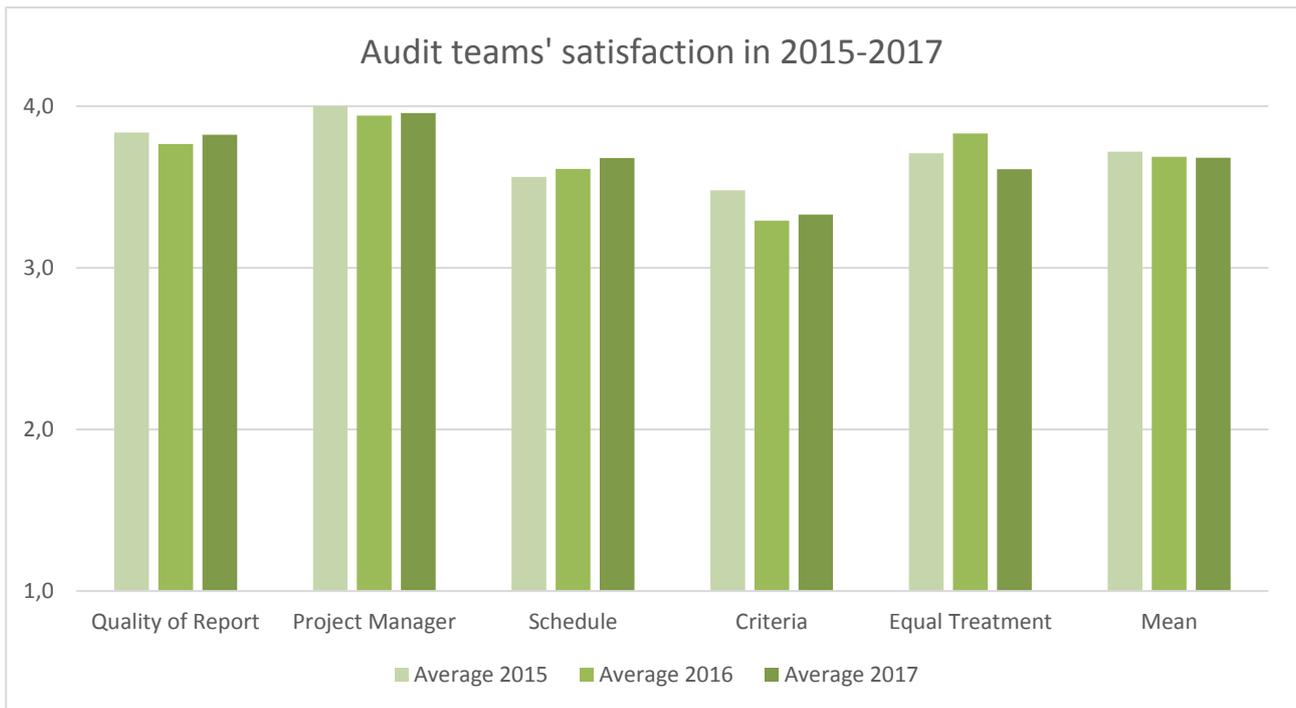


Figure 2: Audit teams' satisfaction in 2015-2017

### Analysis of the open questions: strengths and development goals

Higher education institutions and audit team members also provided plenty of responses to the open questions, which were read by the FINEEC Team for audits and discussed in the feedback session in September 2017. Overall, the institutions and the audit teams were very satisfied with their respective audit projects. The feedback given was mostly in line with the open feedback from the couple of last years.

Based on the analysis of the open questions, the Team summarised the key strengths of the FINEEC audit process to the following:

- Professionalism of the audit team members and of the audit team chairs
  - o success in recruiting team members
  - o satisfaction and willingness of the team members to participate again
- Professional project management by the FINEEC staff
  - o neutral support and guiding of the audit team in their evaluation task
  - o building trust between FINEEC and the HEI
- Continuous development of the audit process that is done jointly by the FINEEC Team for audits
  - o has created a common understanding of the audit process and of the project managers role within the whole team
  - o commitment and resources for systematic development of the process

Although the main development focus is now being directed towards the upcoming third round of audits, the Team identified and decided upon two minor development goals for the term 2017-2018 based especially on the feedback of the HEI's:

- More focus on formulating interview questions that are easy to understand
- Identifying good practice regarding making the interview sessions more relaxed