



FINNISH EDUCATION
EVALUATION CENTRE

AUDIT OF LAHTI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES 2016

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Abstract

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Authors

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The Finnish Education Evaluation Council has conducted an audit of Lahti university of Applied Sciences. Based on the international audit team's recommendation and the audit report, the Higher Education Evaluation Committee has decided to require the institution to undergo a re-audit. In its current state the quality system of Lahti University of Applied Sciences does not fulfil the national criteria set for the quality management of higher education institutions, and thus the system cannot be said to correspond to the European quality assurance principles and recommendations for higher education institutions.

The object of the audit was the quality system that Lahti University of Applied Sciences has developed based on its own needs and goals. The optional audit target chosen by the institution was the Student entrepreneurship.

The following were regarded as key strengths of the quality system:

- People's enthusiasm and commitment to immediate improvements are strong at all levels of the organisation and this makes a solid foundation for the future improvement.
- A strong common quality culture is based on open and transparent information. The quality culture has substantially improved since the first audit.
- The relationship between students and teachers appeared to be close, cooperative and open, which reflects the core value of the system: "We are all quality makers," while the learning atmosphere is relaxed and positive.

Among other things, the following recommendations were made for Lahti University of Applied Sciences:

- The roles and responsibilities in some parts of the quality system are complex and need clarifying. For example, in RDI-functions the decision making on quality issues is divided between five actors in the organisation. The problems and challenges faced at the operational level (e.g. evidenced by teacher-student informal exchanges) could be documented more systematically to form an aggregated picture of operations.
- The volume of information produced by the system poses challenges in the analysis phase. Procedures for systematic information gathering, communication and use should be improved. Information about quality issues is available, but not necessarily perceived as relevant or easily accessible for internal and external stakeholders.
- The current quality system is only partially in use at the degree programme level and that has enabled the continuance of problems in some programmes. Developing the layer of the quality system underneath the faculties with concrete elements would help to increase the engagement of the staff and students to the system as a whole.

The re-audit will concentrate on the quality system's link with the quality system's link with strategic management emphasizing the involvement of all institutional levels and units, and the quality system as a whole.

Keywords

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

Tiivistelmä

Julkaisija

Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus

Julkaisun nimi

Lahden ammattikorkeakoulun auditointi 2016

Tekijät

Erno Tornikoski, Riikka Ahmaniemi, Mona Fjellström, Martin Galevski, Mika Tuuliainen, Johanna Kolhinen ja Matti Kajaste

Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus on toteuttanut Lahden ammattikorkeakoulun auditoinnin. Perustuen kansainvälisen auditointiryhmän suositukseen ja auditointiraporttiin edellyttää korkeakoulujen arviointijaosto korkeakoululta uusinta-auditointia. Lahden ammattikorkeakoulun laatujärjestelmä ei täytä korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnalle asetettuja kansallisia kriteereitä eikä sen näin ollen voida sanoa vastaavan eurooppalaisia korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnan periaatteita ja suosituksia.

Auditoinnin kohteena oli Lahden ammattikorkeakoulun laatujärjestelmä, jonka korkeakoulu on kehittänyt omista lähtökohdistaan ja tavoitteidensa mukaisesti. Korkeakoulun valitsema vapaaehtoinen auditointikohde oli opiskelijayrittäjyys.

Laatujärjestelmän vahvuuksia ovat erityisesti:

- Ihmisten innostuneisuus ja sitoutuneisuus tehdä välittömiä parannuksia toimintaan on vahvaa kaikilla organisaation tasoilla. Tämä luo jämäkän perustan tulevalle kehitystyölle.
- Vankka tiedon avoimuuteen ja läpinäkyvyyteen perustuva laatukulttuuri on kehittynyt ja parantunut selvästi edellisen auditoinnin jälkeen.
- Opiskelijoiden ja opettajien välinen suhde vaikuttaa läheiseltä, avoimelta ja toimivalta, mikä heijastelee organisaation ydinarvoa ”Me ollaan laaduntekijöitä kaikki, ihan jokainen”. LAMKin opiskeluilmapiiri on rento ja myönteinen.

Lahden ammattikorkeakoululle esitetään muun muassa seuraavia kehittämissuosituksia:

- Laatujärjestelmään liittyvät roolit ja vastuut ovat osin monimutkaisia ja vaativat selkiyttämistä. Esimerkiksi TKI-toimintojen laadunhallinnasta päättää viisi erilaista toimijaa. Ongelmat ja haasteet, joita käytännön tasolla (esimerkiksi opettajan ja opiskelijan välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa) kohdataan, tulisi saada kirjattua järjestelmällisemmin talteen, jotta toiminnoista syntyisi kattava operationaalisen tason kokonaiskuva.
- Laadunhallintajärjestelmän tuottaman informaation määrä vaikeuttaa tiedon analysointia. Systemaattisia tiedonkeruun ja hyödyntämisen tapoja tulee kehittää edelleen. Laatuasiat ovat hyvin esillä, mutta ne eivät ole ulkoisten ja sisäisten sidosryhmien näkökulmasta välttämättä helposti saatavilla tai sisällöltään tarkoituksenmukaisia.
- Koulutusohjelmatasolla laatujärjestelmää hyödynnetään vaihtelevasti tai vain osittain, jonka vuoksi osassa ohjelmia on nähtävissä pitempään jatkuneita ongelmia. Niiden laatujärjestelmän konkreettisten osien kehittäminen, joita yksiköiden sisäisen toiminnan tasolla hyödynnetään, vahvistaisi henkilökunnan ja opiskelijoiden osallisuutta järjestelmän kokonaisuudessa.

Uusinta-auditoinnissa tullaan keskittymään siihen, miten laatujärjestelmä kytkeytyy strategiseen johtamiseen painottaen sen toimivuutta eri organisaation tasoilla. Lisäksi uusinta-auditoinnissa tarkastellaan laatujärjestelmän kokonaisuutta.

Avainsanat

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

Sammandrag

Utgivare

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering

Publikation

Audit of Lahti University of Applied Sciences 2016

(Auditering av Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu 2016)

Författare

Erno Tornikoski, Riikka Ahmaniemi, Mona Fjellström, Martin Galevski, Mika Tuulainen, Johanna Kolhinen och Matti Kajaste

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering har utfört en auditering av Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu (LAMK). Utgående från den internationella auditeringsgruppens rekommendation och auditeringsrapport, har Sektionen för utvärdering av högskolorna beslutat kräva att högskolan genomgår en omdisponering. För närvarande uppfyller Lahden ammattikorkeakoulus kvalitetssystem inte de kriterier för kvalitetshantering som ställts upp för högskolorna på nationell nivå, och därför kan kvalitetssystemen inte anses motsvara de europeiska principerna och rekommendationerna för högskolornas för kvalitetssäkring.

Föremål för auditeringen var Lahden ammattikorkeakoulus kvalitetssystem, som högskolan tagit fram utgående från sina egna utgångspunkter och enligt sina egna mål. Det valfria auditeringsobjekt som högskolan utsett var student entreprenörskap.

Enligt auditeringsgruppen är kvalitetssystemets väsentligaste styrkor de följande:

- Människorna förhåller sig entusiastiskt och engagerat till att verkställa omedelbara förbättringar på alla organisationsnivåer, vilket ger en solid grund för framtida förbättringar.
- En stark gemensam kvalitetskultur bygger på öppen och transparent information. Kvalitetskulturen har blivit betydligt bättre sedan den första auditeringen.
- Studerandena och lärarna verkade ha ett nära förhållande med samarbete och öppenhet, vilket avspeglar systemets kärnvärdering, "Det är vi som skapar kvalitet", och en avslappnad och positiv studieatmosfär.

Bland annat följande rekommendationer framlades för LAMK:

- I vissa delar av kvalitetssystemet är roll- och uppgiftsfördelningen komplex och behöver förtydligas. Bland annat besluten om kvalitetsfrågor i FUI-verksamheten fattas av fem aktörer inom organisationen. Problemen och utmaningarna på den operativa nivån (t.ex. i den informella växelverkan mellan lärare och studerande) borde dokumenteras mer systematiskt för att skapa en övergripande bild av verksamheten.
- Mängden av information som genereras i systemet medför utmaningar för analysfasen. Processerna för systematisk insamling, kommunikation och användning av information bör utvecklas. Information om kvalitetsfrågor finns tillgänglig, men den upplevs inte nödvändigtvis som relevant eller lättillgänglig för interna och externa intressenter.
- Det nuvarande kvalitetssystemet används bara delvis i utbildningsprogrammen och detta har lett till långvariga problem i vissa program. En utveckling av de konkreta delarna av kvalitetssystemet som används internt på enhetsnivå skulle förstärka personalens och de studerandes medverkan i kvalitetssystemet som helhet.

Omauditeringen kommer att fokusera på kvalitetssystemets koppling till strategisk ledning och hur systemet fungerar på olika organisationsnivåer. Vid omauditeringen granskas dessutom kvalitetssystemet som helhet.

Nyckelord

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

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Audit targets and process

1.1 Audit targets

The target of the audit is the quality system that Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LAMK) has developed based on its own needs and goals. The focus of the audit was on 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 is to help the institution to identify strengths, good practices and areas in need of development in its own operations. The audits that FINEEC carry out 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 the quality system is.

Lahti University of Applied Sciences chose "Student entrepreneurship" as its optional audit target. As samples of degree education, the UAS selected the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Design; Packaging Design and Branding and the Master's Degree Programme in Entrepreneurship and Business Competence. As the third sample of degree education, the audit team chose the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Mechanical Engineering.

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

The audit targets of Lahti 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)
 - c. The societal impact and regional development work²
 - d. Optional audit target: Student entrepreneurship
5. Samples of degree education:
 - i. Bachelor's Degree programme in Design; Packaging Design and Branding
 - ii. Master's Degree Programme in Entrepreneurship and Business Competence
 - iii. Bachelor's Degree Programme in Mechanical Engineering
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 Audit process

The audit is based on the basic material and self-evaluation report submitted by LAMK to FINEEC as well as an audit visit to the institution on 23–25 February 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 LAMK, the audit was conducted in English by an international audit team. Prior to the appointment of the audit team, LAMK 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 members were:

Professor in Entrepreneurship, **Erno Tornikoski**, from Grenoble Ecole de Management, in France (Chair)

Team Coach, **Riikka Ahmaniemi**, Tiimiakatemia, from Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences

Education developer, **Mona Fjellström**, PhD, from the Centre for Educational Development, at Umeå University, in Sweden

Martin Galevski, DPhil Student, from the Department of Education, at the University of Oxford, in the United Kingdom

Head of Educational Affairs, **Mika Tuuliainen**, from the Federation of Finnish Enterprises (FFE, Suomen yrittäjät ry)

Johanna Kolhinen, senior advisor from FINEEC, acted as the responsible project manager and secretary of the audit team and **Matti Kajaste**, senior advisor from FINEEC, was the backup for the project manager.

The audit visit to LAMK was conducted over a three-day period. The purpose of the audit visit was to verify and supplement the observations made based on the submitted audit material describing LAMK'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. LAMK 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 oriented 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 (MoEC). Universities and UASs receive most of their funding from the MoEC, 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 UAS educational responsibilities are stipulated in their operating licences.

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. This 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 a 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. midwifery) 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 Lahti University of Applied Sciences

Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LAMK) is an international, multidisciplinary, higher education institution which offers courses in the following fields: Culture, Business, Social and Health Care, Technology and Tourism. LAMK was incorporated as a limited company on 1 January 2015. At this stage also the organization was reformed and the organizational changes will take the concrete form in 2018 with relocation to Niemi campus.

The President acts as the Chief Executive Officer of Lahti UAS Ltd as required by the Limited Liability Companies Act and reports to the Board of the limited company. Other bodies of the institution include the Examination Board, the Higher Education Board and the Executive Group. The institution has two Vice-Presidents and they act as deputies for the President. The Director of Administration serves as the deputy to the CEO (Figure 1).

The operational organisation of LAMK consists of profit units which are based on faculties, and the supporting development services. The management of LAMK consists of the Executive Group, the extended Executive Group, and Coordinators of Education (15 people). Top management comprises the Executive Group and the extended Executive Group.

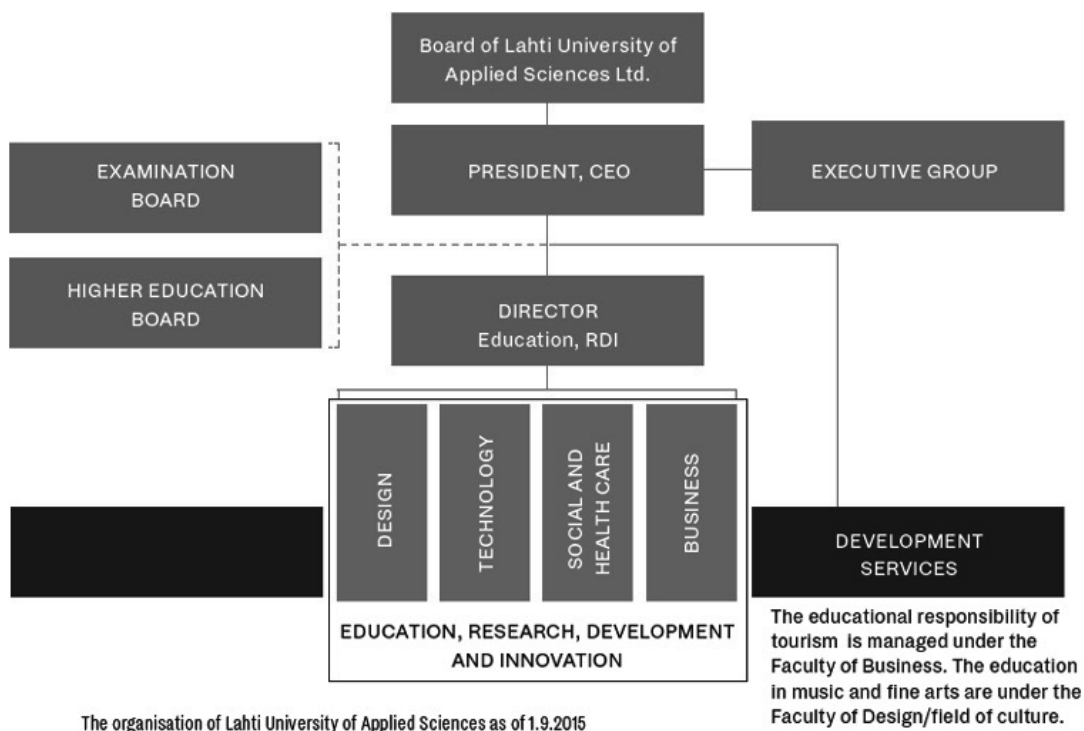


FIGURE 1: The organisation of Lahti University of Applied Sciences as of 1 September 2015.

The Executive Group of LAMK includes the Vice-Presidents (2), Director of Administration, Director (education and RDI), and Deans of the faculties (4). The extended Executive Group includes the members of the core Executive Group, Director of Regional Development, Development Director, Director of Research, RDI Directors, Director of Information Services, Manager of Human Resources, Communications Manager and Head of Information Management. The Deans are in charge of the faculties and report to the Director (education, RDI).

Development Services report to the President and are responsible for strategy work, operational planning and quality, financial and HR management, higher education services, pedagogical development, library and information services, communications and marketing services, regional development services, campus development, RDI services, and the coordination of external services. The Development Services also coordinate the FUAS collaboration.

LAMK has 3923 students (full-time equivalent) enrolled in degree programmes (Table 1). Most of the students are in the fields of Business, Social and Health Care and Technology and Engineering, smaller numbers in Culture and Tourism and Hospitality. The number of degrees awarded annually is approximately 732 in Bachelor's level and 91 in Master's level.

TABLE 1: Key numbers of LAMK

Students (Full-time equivalent) *	Number
Bachelor's degree Master's degree	3923,0 217,5
Degrees awarded **	Number
Bachelor's degree Master's degree	732,3 91,3
Staff (FTE) *	Number
Teachers Research staff Other staff	215,0 38,0 146,0
*Numbers provided by LAMK, 2015 **Statistics from the Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015, Annual average of past three years	

The number of employees (Table 1 and 2) in September 2015 stands at 399, and the number of visiting part-time lecturers is annually around 15 (FTE, full-time-equivalent). The number of employees divided by units, including their primary roles are presented in the following table:

TABLE 2: Number of staff divided by units and primary roles of the staff.

Unit	Teaching staff	RDI staff	Support staff	Total
Faculty of Business	51	5	8	64
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality	1	0	1	2
Institute of Design and Fine Arts	36	1	16	53
Institute of Music and Drama	15	0	2	17
Faculty of Social Health Care	59	7	8	74
Faculty of Technology	50	8	10	68
Development Services	3	17	101	121
Total	215	38	146	399

The quality policy

As a consequence of external changes and organizational independence, the start of a fully independent quality system took in place in LAMK in January 2015. The objectives of the quality system are set and defined by the QUALITYteam and connected to strategic objectives. The inclusion of staff members in the objective setting is limited to those who are members of the QUALITYteam. There is a well-developed division of responsibility concerning quality work in the Quality Handbook and the key people responsible for quality issues are committed and have the necessary skills. As a consequence of the recent recruitment of ten new key positions, the distribution of responsibility for quality work in operations and at the unit level requires some more time and clarification.

The quality system produces a large quantity of information that is, in general, well documented, and largely serves the needs of the direction and staff. Some of the feedback channels felt redundant at times, especially by the students. This has partly contributed to the difficulties in getting students motivated in participating in development activities. The information produced by the quality system is available to different stakeholders mainly via the intranet but is also actively communicated to external stakeholders. The top management of LAMK demonstrate a clear and strong commitment to the development of a positive quality culture.

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

3.1 Rationale, objectives and division of responsibility

The quality system of LAMK is based on Deming PDCA cycle (Figure 2).

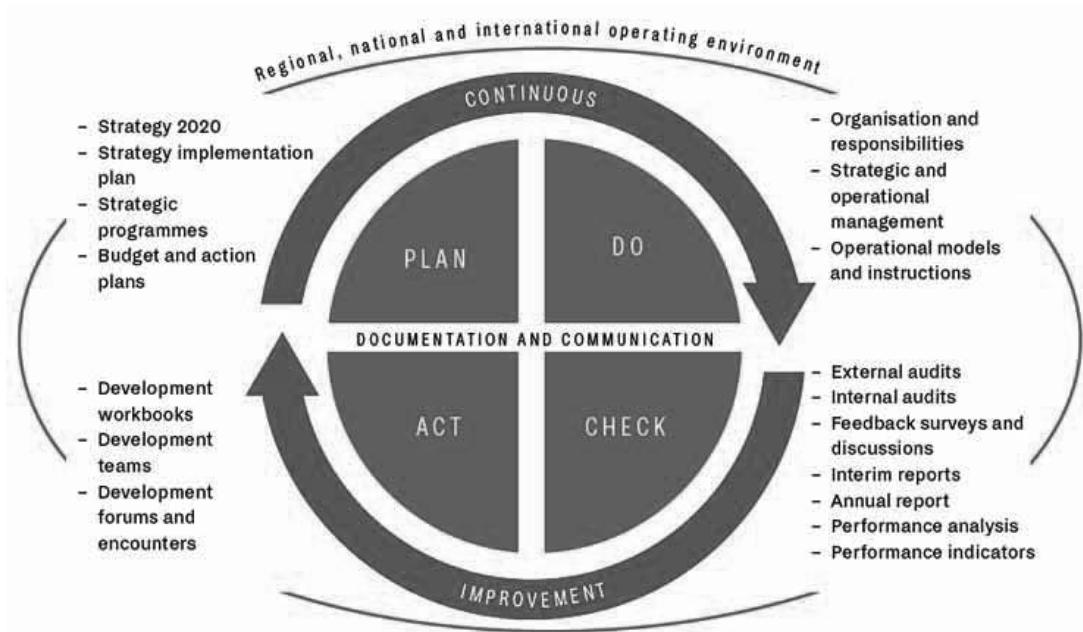


FIGURE 2: The quality system

The objectives of the quality system of LAMK are to (i) support the attaining of the strategic objectives and vision; (ii) harmonize and streamline quality assurance and quality procedures; (iii) produce systematic and reliable information by monitoring and evaluating operations; and (iv) promote the development of the quality culture and the commitment of students, staff and stakeholders in the development of operations. The objectives provide a clear framework for the quality system, and are planned to be reviewed annually in connection with the evaluation of the quality management system.

The QUALITYteam forms the foundation for LAMK's quality system

As a consequence of external changes and organizational independence when the organisation was founded as a limited company, the start of a fully independent quality system took in place in January 2015. Before that LAMK was part of the Education Consortium and dependent on its steering. The objectives of the current quality system have been primarily determined by the QUALITYteam and set out in the Quality Handbook. While the QUALITYteam elaborates the objectives of the current quality system, LAMK personnel had the possibility to comment

the objectives during quality days. The QUALITYteam and the content of the current Quality Handbook has been directed by the Executive Group, and approved by the Higher Education Board. The interviews specified that QUALITYteam has currently an operational, even technical role, which is planned to be developed to a more strategic level in the near future.

According to the Quality Handbook, the Board of LAMK monitor and assess the functionality of the quality system. The briefs of Board meetings do not demonstrate an active role by the Board in monitoring the functioning of the quality system. In 2015 the Board discussed in three separate meetings (out of 12 meetings) the coming audit visit, but not about the functioning of the quality system itself. Rather than discussing the functioning of the quality system in regular Board meetings, it was reported that this issue is discussed in relation to quarterly interim reports and special strategy days. Moreover, while the President is in charge of quality and the development of operations, the Executive Group steers the quality development work. The evidence gathered during the audit visit demonstrates the active roles of the President and Executive Group in handling quality related issues and taking these issues up in their meetings.

Furthermore, while the Vice President (strategic management) is responsible for the development of the quality system and is in charge of evaluations and the development and implementation of new quality procedures, in reality, the QUALITYteam develops the quality system (e.g. designs new quality procedures, takes them to faculties, etc.). The QUALITYteam consists of members from all faculties (i.e. quality coordinators), support services, and the student union. The audit visit provided clear evidence of the active roles of the Vice President and the QUALITYteam in developing the quality system. The QUALITYteam have recently introduced, for example, an electronic course feedback system and quality reviews for faculty members.

Middle level management also has a role in implementing quality management procedures and monitoring quality. For example, the Dean of Faculty is in charge of quality work and its organization in his/her faculty. The Dean is assisted by a Coordinator of Education, responsible for the quality of teaching and learning at the faculty, and an RDI Director, who is responsible for the quality management of RDI activities in the specific focus area. The interviews during the audit visit clearly demonstrate how the middle management is involved in the quality system.

Finally, according to the Quality Handbook, teachers, other staff and students are responsible for the quality and development of their own work. The interviews with staff and students demonstrated their dedication to continuously develop their own work. For example, teachers regularly invited direct feedback from students and acted on it. The students seemed to appreciate this “fix-it-immediately” approach of the teachers, and it enables the feeling of strong, engaging and student-centred quality approach. While development issues are recorded in the Development Workbooks at the faculty level, the link between operational level problem solving and faculty level Development Workbooks was not clearly evident. The solving of issues or problems at the operational level should be documented systematically for future use, which would help to form and follow an aggregated picture of the issues or challenges in the operations concerned.

The student and staff involvement poses a challenge

The audit team finds that the chain-of-responsibilities from President to staff is well thought out particularly at managerial levels, and especially taking into account the newness of the current quality system. Indeed, during the past few years, LAMK has created several new positions in the quality system, and has recruited many new people, of which several have roles in the quality system. The audit team recommends a continued further clarification and refinement of responsibilities at staff and student levels.

The self-evaluation report done by LAMK in 2015 points out that teacher and student involvement in quality related activities is a real and recognized challenge. The report specifies, "...challenges exist in terms of engaging students to give feedback and participate in development activities" (p. 5), and highlights teacher engagement, competence and responsibilities as areas for development. For the audit team, it is clear that the principal role of the students in the quality system seems to be reduced that of feedback provider, especially when their own interest or benefit is at question. While students have their representatives in most of the development teams (nine out of 13), the larger student body is not participating actively as equal 'quality makers', in the development of the quality system and decision-making. In the future, the role of students in the quality system could be based on students taking on some degree of responsibility and seeing quality procedures as a responsibility rather than just a quick-fix opportunity for immediate problems. Moreover, students seem to be overwhelmed by the multitude of feedback channels, which sometimes include many redundant questions or issues. Similarly, the teachers and staff need to be actively engaged in the process of developing relevant support, engaging in competence development and assigning clear roles. In order to reach a low hierarchal community (p. 9 in the Quality Handbook), sustainability and long-term development, the quality system needs to fully engage at the grass roots level at LAMK.

3.2 Communication of the quality policy

Availability of information fosters LAMK's quality culture

LAMK's quality system is summarized in the Quality Handbook, which describes the background of quality management at LAMK, its organization and the responsibilities assigned as quality work, as well as the operational aspects of the quality system (e.g. the principles and objectives, the PDCA-cycle, the documentation and communication, etc.). The Quality Handbook is designed to offer a holistic view of quality activities at LAMK, and to be available for both internal (staff intranet, the Reppu online platform) and external (LAMK website) stakeholders. The Quality Handbook is updated "as needed" after the Executive Group's annual review based on development work and feedback received on the quality system. The current version of the Quality Handbook was accepted by the Higher Education Board less than a year ago (Spring 2015).

In the self-evaluation report (LAMK, 2015) it is pointed out that the openness and transparency of information are an important part of the quality culture at LAMK. Through the intranet the staff can access information about internal quality work, operational planning of the institution, and results of assessments and surveys. From the Reppu platform students can find information about feedback channels available to them, results of assessments and surveys, and how to get involved in operational development. The LAMK website, which was redesigned in 2014, presents the quality system (PDCA cycle) to external parties, and provides access to the LAMK strategy, Quality Handbook, and the audit manual of the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre. In addition, external stakeholders are kept updated about quality issues through the LAMK newsletter and a variety of joint events (e.g. the quality meetings held in different faculties). The interviewed external stakeholders seemed content with the information they receive from LAMK and its operations.

Moreover, real time information about key student and staff indicators are available in the LAMK Data Warehouse (DW), which can be accessed through the staff Intranet. All staff members can also access information about the funding model indicators through the staff intranet. LAMK has also adopted so-called Development Workbooks at the faculty level, which describe the current development objectives chosen based on assessments and feedback results. Quality coordinators are responsible for the documentation of Development Workbooks. These Workbooks are on the working group pages in the staff intranet. The use of Development workbooks is voluntary at programme level.

Information on quality is available to all stakeholders

The audit team finds that relevant information about the quality system and related processes is available for both internal and external stakeholders through different platforms and helps to increase transparency and openness about LAMK's efforts in quality management. The self-evaluation report (LAMK, 2015) indicates that sometimes it is difficult (especially for staff and students) to find sought-after information from the available platforms. Information about quality issues is available, but not necessarily perceived as relevant or easily accessible. To overcome these difficulties, LAMK has engaged in a development project to create a new staff and student intranet.

The audit team can see that LAMK has made a good effort to provide different stakeholders with information concerning quality work and its results. In addition to putting information at the disposal of external (and internal) stakeholders, LAMK is attempting to reach them through various different means, such as emailing, newsletters, unofficial meetings, quality meetings, etc. The important things to be communicated are not perhaps the details of a particular survey or specific indicators, but about signalling to different external and internal stakeholders about LAMK's engagement in continuously improving its operations and processes. To this end, LAMK informs external stakeholders about the current quality development activities in official external stakeholder meetings. Furthermore, LAMK has made some effort to identify what kinds of information needs different stakeholders have. This path should be further developed in LAMK. Knowledge about the information needs of different stakeholders could help to better target communication of quality issues, and perhaps even motivate the receivers to pay more attention to such tailored information.

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

The strategy and the quality policy are new but designed to work together

A new strategy for LAMK (Strategy 2020) was accepted by the Board on 22 April 2015 after a yearlong process, in which all internal stakeholders took part. On paper, the quality system is part of the overall operational planning of LAMK. The objectives of strategic projects and funding indicators are monitored in accordance with the operational planning calendar. Additionally, a strategy action plan has been written in which the responsibilities related to various development projects are specified. Furthermore, the operations of LAMK are directed by ten strategic programmes: Pedagogical, RDI, Regional Development, HR, Communication, Technology, Internationalization, Students Welfare, Students Entrepreneurship, and Learning Environment programmes. Each strategic programme has an annual plan, which is evaluated according to the annual planning calendar.

During the Education Consortium era before 2015 LAMK also had a strategy with a vision, values and objectives. At that time, strategy implementation plan was evaluated annually, which gave rise to development issues. The current quality system is based on the previous quality work under the Education Consortium that has then been further developed towards the current system. Because the new Strategy 2020 and the ten strategic programmes are less than a year old, it is not possible to evaluate how the current quality system helps to monitor and evaluate the success of the implementation of the new Strategy 2020. A plan to carry out the first yearly evaluation at the end of 2016 has been scheduled.

Quality system's link with strategic management

The quality system of LAMK and the information it produces serve the integral parts of the strategic and operations management. Procedures for the use and communication of quality information works well at the top level but are not fully and evenly distributed in the rest of the organization. The quality system is designed to support the core duties of the organization but the widely-spread use of informal and parallel information channels results in latent information and unsystematic actions. Much of the systematic performance monitoring data is quantitative, which raises questions about how LAMK ensures that they achieve and maintain their qualitative value based goals. The division of responsibility is partially effective due to the complex matrix of actors. The strong commitment to the execution of roles is visible in the quality work which creates a good base for the future development work.

*The link between the quality system and strategic management at LAMK is at an **emerging** stage.*

4.1 Information produced by the quality system for strategic management

The Quality Handbook is a condensed guide to the quality system

The quality system is tightly connected to the LAMK strategy and the vision of being a “promoter of regional growth and an international reformer of future learning”. Forming the basis for the quality system the Strategy 2020 document clearly states the underpinning values (developed in cooperation with students, staff and external stakeholders), the mission, institutional focus areas and education profiles.

The LAMK Quality Handbook acts as a condensed guide to the quality system with descriptions of strategies, procedures, roles and responsibilities. As a driver for the strategic and operational quality work the quality system is built on the Deming PDCA quality cycle, linking annual planning cycles, monitoring and evaluating processes to development actions (see Figure 2 (Quality Handbook, p.

18 presented in chapter 3)). Following the PDCA quality cycle and having a fine-grained division of roles and responsibilities has strengthened the communication between internal and external stakeholders and served operations management well.

Mandates should be clarified to prevent information loss

There are a large number of student feedback channels including a web-based course evaluation system. Due to low response rates the web-based system has been revised and more feedback opportunities has been developed. Summaries of course evaluation results are made centrally at the Development Services and delivered to deans and line managers for further actions. There are also staff feedback procedures adding to the basis for development discussions and competence development. Furthermore, thirteen development teams have been established with the aim to support cross institutional information exchange and dialogue.

One core underpinning value presented in the Quality Handbook is “We are all ‘quality makers’, every single one of us”. This motto, used as a slogan for communal spirit, is an illustration of how the quality system is supposed to serve as a platform for the joint production of systematic and reliable information supporting the attainment of strategic objectives. The information exchange will create a base for the commitment of students, staff and stakeholders in the development of operations. Seventeen different actors, from students to the LAMK Board are defined as ‘quality makers’ with a brief description of their responsibilities in the quality system. Managers responsible for different core duties and support functions have meetings regularly with the President (including the Executive group, the extended Executive group and Hotspot meetings).

The close cooperation and information sharing with regional actors were evident both in the Board representation and in statements made by different external actors during the site visit. Stakeholder dialogue are reported in internally in various management groups. The interviews showed, however, that some external stakeholders experienced that the communication sometimes was perceived as being one-way (in the interview with external stakeholders). Results and further measures announced are not systematically communicated to them. This can be the result of distributed responsibilities in the organisation but it can also be the result of flaws in stakeholder feedback. This can be solved by the establishment of more formal and systematic communication strategies. Another recommendation is to communicate the dialogue with external stakeholders to grass-root actors within the institution.

The ambition to engage all actors at the institution is laudable but the complex matrix of actors and responsibilities could cause a lack of clarity in mandate and roles causing information gaps or confusion. A recommendation is to focus the responsibilities to those who have an institutional mandate and find new ways to engage other actors.

The future steps focus on streamlining and harmonising the system

There are well structured systems for performance and reporting and monitoring of key indicators. The Data Warehouse (DW) offers managers and staff data both for strategic and operational purposes. Much of the systematic performance monitoring data is quantitative, which raises questions about how LAMK ensures that they achieve and maintain their qualitative value based goals. A key issue, for instance, is how LAMK ensures the attainment of students learning by “collaboration, experimentation, inclusion and creativity”. How is it possible to judge if “RDI activities facilitate skills and knowledge transfer, emphasize an international dimension and value networks” or whether digitalization “facilitates ubiquitous learning”? These are all issues that are influenced by discipline, prerequisites and teacher competence (to mention a few aspects) and hence important quality aspects to evaluate, discuss and learn about at program or departmental level. It is also issues difficult to evaluate at strategic or policy programme level.

Based on key concepts such as “harmonise”, “streamline” and “quality culture” the quality system is designed to be a road map for a broad area of management purposes. It also gives a platform for the “construction” of a new, more coherent internal organization and quality culture, preparing for the movement to a new common campus, which was clearly stated in the interview with top management, deans and support staff. The Development Workbooks act as a support for the ongoing quality development, but the received documentation and interviews showed that their use is still at an emerging stage in some of the units.

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

An action-oriented approach is widely adopted

There is a strong commitment from the top management and clear evidence of open and informal communication between managerial levels. Both top and middle management (deans and different support staff) gave evidence of their satisfaction with the quality system and information produced. The site visit though, also gave evidence of a strong action-oriented culture that has resulted in the frequent use of parallel informal information gathering and dialogues. This information by and large remains undocumented and not available for systematic quality development.

It was also evident that the quality system did not engage or fulfil the information needs of teachers or students. Most of the educational evaluations and problem solving were based on semi-private communication between teachers and students and were not subject to systematic documentation or communication on a more subject, course or programme level. Teachers’ perceptions of their role in the quality system, as well as LAMK’s educational vision of and how to work with educational development showed large variations. However, the enthusiasm towards development work is substantial and creates a good base for future actions.

The continuum of changes has challenged the development work

The development of a new strategy and quality system has been accompanied by organizational reforms and the establishment of new key roles. Ten of these have been filled during the last year which has meant that the clarification of tasks and responsibilities still is an ongoing process. During the interviews in the site visit the audit team met staff on a number of occasions saying that they were quite new in their position and not fully aware of all quality system aspects. A reasonable assumption of the audit team is that this has an impact on the quality system's full potential.

The QUALITYteam, operating under the Vice President, and the Development services, operating directly under the President, are responsible for much of the systematic information gathering and communication. Their task is to provide all levels and actors in the organization with information that enables continued quality development. The breadth and scope of their mission creates a basis for expertise and systematization, but the interviews gave evidence of heavy workloads causing difficulties to analyse, synthesize and communicate relevant information in a systematic way. The focus on delivering best possible information to top management also seemed to affect their ability to support teachers and students with relevant and sought-after information.

The quality system of LAMK is designed to be an integral part of the overall strategic and operational management, supporting the institution as a proactive regional development partner and as an outstanding educational institution. The quality system and the information produced serves strategic and operations management at the top level of the institution. However, procedures ensuring that quality information is made specific to answer the information needs of different actors are not fully developed yet. Neither are the procedures for information use and systematic communication at all levels of LAMK and to external stakeholders. The information produced is made accessible via different electronic systems, but parallel to the systematically collected information there is also a great deal of information retrieval on a more individual basis. This makes it a challenge to analyse, synthesize, communicate and use relevant information in a systematic way for sustainable strategic and operations management.

4.3 Quality culture

An enthusiastic atmosphere has enabled very responsive quality work

The site visit gave a lot of evidence of a communal vision and a development oriented quality culture. There is generally a strong commitment to the strategic vision and goals and much effort have been focused on empowering actors and build a proactive development culture. Staff at different levels talked about the trust, energy and possibilities in the new way of working.

There were though signals of staff not fully familiar with their roles and responsibilities in the quality system. The operational level staff were mostly concerned about the quality of their own work and eager to fix the problems where they were without thinking about their effect or

relation to other actions or the quality system. This is seen by the audit team an excellent base for developing more common system but there is also a chance of losing information due to the active improvement work made locally when it does not create input into the system in the official sense. Several actors described actions and information gathering procedures that were parallel to the quality system. This means that the use and communication of quality information throughout the organization is uneven after the faculty level.

The ambitious goals and high speed of the development of quality work has meant heavy workloads for some personnel at the same time others (mainly teachers and students) were not so engaged. Student representatives are engaged in different teams and development projects but generally students interpreted themselves as being information providers, not being part of the development actions. The overall impression of the audit team is that the quality system functions unevenly due to variable commitment in the execution of roles and responsibilities. The quality system is presently in need of consolidation and more grass-roots elements but also engagement and empowerment. It is hard to find your place in the system from your circle of work if the system does not include clear elements to attach to.

Development of the quality system

LAMK has various procedures in place for evaluating different parts of the quality system; however, it lacks holistic oversight in order to assess the functionality of the main objectives of the quality system. In addition, the quality system is not sufficiently able to identify the system's strengths and areas in need of development. This is in part due to the volume of information produced by the system, which poses challenges in the phase of analysis. As a result, quick identification of problems and rapid adjustments is problematic. While some of the recommendations from the first audit in 2006 are no longer relevant for the present operational environment of LAMK, there is evidence that a number of them have been taken into account. Since the first audit, significant improvement has been made in the commitment to strengthen the quality culture across all levels of the organization, forming a good foundation for future development.

*The development of the quality system is at an **emerging** stage.*

5.1 Procedures for developing the quality system

The external and internal evaluation information is collected actively

The system for developing and evaluating the quality of procedures at LAMK is based on the traditional PDCA quality cycle. The PDCA cycle is used at different levels of the organization to develop and monitor the implementation of operations. A variety of different tools are put into use to check the functioning of the system, such as external and internal audits, surveys, reports and performance indicators. The quality system produces a considerable amount of data for top management purposes. However, the volume of information produced on a system level creates problems in the later stages of analysis and puts into question the efficiency of its use. As a result, quick identification of problems and rapid adjustments present a challenge.

On a faculty and programme level, the documentation of the development of the quality management procedures is weak and substantially lower compared to the strategic level. In light of this, the audit team would encourage LAMK to consider rationalizing and/or prioritizing

segments of the feedback system, in order to avoid overlap and provide more appropriate, timely and reliable documentation to assist both strategic and operational decision-making. In this respect, attention should be also paid to the workload produced by the quality system. So far, there is no data concerning how laborious the development and maintenance of the quality system is.

The use of development procedures varies between units

The Development Workbooks provide a good basis to document and support the progress monitoring of objectives which have arisen from the various feedback and evaluation channels at faculty level. The workbooks include information on concrete developmental activities that need to be taken in order to reach the objectives, as well as the persons in charge and schedules for the assessment of results. While the workbooks are available on the Development Workbook pages, more attention should be paid to informing students and staff of what actions have been taken in light of their input. In doing so, LAMK will not only benefit from making progress more visible, but will also further strengthen the commitment of the institution to openness and transparency of information as an important part of the quality culture at LAMK.

In the last few years, efforts have been made to harmonize and streamline the quality system by introducing common procedures across different levels of the organisation. However, differences remain in the way in which units use and manage quality operations. For instance, in regards to the length of the cycle for updating and revising the curriculum, the audit team found significant discrepancies between units, despite the existence of university level curriculum guidelines. Knowledge about the practices across units was to some extent also limited. In order to strengthen the use of harmonized approaches to quality management, LAMK would benefit from increasing knowledge sharing and cooperation, making best practices more visible across units. This is an important step having in mind that all units will soon move to a new shared campus.

A more systematic and holistic view is needed to support development-oriented management

While various parts of the quality system are evaluated on annual bases, the procedures for evaluation, as well as the system as a whole and the attainment of the four objectives of the quality system could be further strengthened. The development of the system is currently discussed in joint quality workshops, however, there are no specific mechanisms that review the overall functioning of the system in light of the objectives set. As a result, the quality system often lacks the capacity to identify the system's strengths and target areas in need of development.

The impression of the audit team is that some of the problematic areas on a system level are identified intuitively by the management and not as a result of systematic monitoring. The audit team would therefore encourage LAMK to consider establishing internal procedures that will assist in assessing the development of the system holistically.

The Student Union LAMKO is a good resource for increasing student participation in the quality system

The QUALITYteam at LAMK has had the primary role in setting the objectives of the quality system. The team includes academic staff of all faculties, support services, as well as representatives from the Student Union LAMKO. As a good practice students are actively engaged in the development of quality operations and participate in a dozen or so other development teams. In order to improve the participation of students, LAMK in cooperation with LAMKO have recently launched a 'Speak out' campaign which clarifies students' feedback channels and encourages students to provide feedback.

While the representatives of LAMKO that the audit team had an opportunity to meet were satisfied with the various opportunities to provide feedback and participate in the improvement of operations, nevertheless, it seemed that they lacked sufficient understanding of the specific functions of the bodies with which they were engaged. The transferring of information from previous student representatives to their successors also appeared to be a challenge. In this respect, in addition to the formal induction for new LAMKO representatives, LAMK should invest further efforts to assist the work of student representatives and familiarise them with their current responsibilities and the previous work done by the specific body. One possible solution for LAMK is to develop a student representative handbook that will assist the work of student representatives.

5.2. Development work after the previous audit

The effects of external shocks and the internal emergence of quality culture since 2006 are clear

Since the first audit of the quality assurance system in 2006, there is evidence that a number of the recommendations suggested by the audit team have been taken into consideration by LAMK. However, as the evaluation took place a decade ago, it is important to emphasize that some of the proposed measures and areas in need for development then are no longer relevant for the present circumstances at LAMK. Particularly evident progress since the last audit has been made in strengthening the quality culture across all levels of the organization. The commitment to quality work and willingness to contribute towards the improvement of LAMK is evident, with all members of the organisation being actively encouraged to get involved in quality work. The number of different platforms that allow stakeholders to share their views confirms this.

After the first audit, the quality system of LAMK has been developed primarily in response to shocks in the external environment. The significant changes in the operating environment, the strategic refocus of the FUAS cooperation, and the operational and financial plans based on the agreement with the Ministry of Education and Culture have all strongly influenced the development of the quality system; but also posed challenges for its functioning. In 2010 the establishment of FUAS – a strategic alliance dealing with the quality of education provision formed by Lahti, Häme and Laurea Universities of Applied Sciences – was initiated as preparation for a potential alliance

between the three institutions. However, as this merger did not take place later on, LAMK has moved from creating a joint quality system towards the development of its own and independent quality procedures.

Since the beginning of 2015, the incorporation of LAMK as a limited company has also resulted in organisational changes and the start of a fully independent system after the Education Consortium era. The new strategy of LAMK was launched in the autumn of 2015 as a result of this process. Due to the recent independence in its own operations, LAMK has had to create and put in place not only a new strategy but also create many new positions in the organisation, and fill those positions with new recruits. In this respect, the system is still at an early stage of enactment and development, where time is required to evaluate the effectiveness of the system and to see how well different quality initiatives will take root.

The role and the meaning of FUAS is recreated

The development of the quality system and operations at LAMK has remained strongly influenced by the work of FUAS, regardless of the fact that a merger did not take place. The strategic foundations of LAMK take into account the objectives of FUAS as an integral part of the overall quality system. The present quality procedures at LAMK have been developed simultaneously and in line with those of the alliance, creating a strong foundation for the transfer of knowledge and expertise in the field of quality management across the three UASs. Cross-evaluation for different aspects of quality is a regular practice and an essential part of FUAS quality management.

While the Federation is an important platform to share good practices and presents a valuable opportunity to learn from each other, each of the institutions still maintains its independence and continues to be responsible for developing its own quality system. Hence, even though the formation of FUAS is clearly intended to achieve greater uniformity in certain aspects of quality procedures and management, it is important for LAMK to build a distinctive quality identity that fits the unique circumstances of the organization. It is therefore a question for the leadership of LAMK to find the appropriate balance and maintain diversity.

In addition to the activities within the FUAS network, LAMK has participated in several other external evaluations. However, in most cases the results of these evaluations have not been used to their full potential. To a large extent, this has been due to the extensive number of such evaluations in which the institution takes part. The impression of the audit team is that the institution has been carried away in participating in as many evaluations as possible, without much consideration to their relevance, their scope and the workload generated. It was therefore difficult to see the logic and long term strategy in the evaluations conducted. In this respect, more strategic planning and prioritization of the participation in external evaluations is needed, as well as more systematic follow-up procedures on how the results of these evaluations are utilized.

Quality management of the institution's core duties

6.1 Degree education

There is a strong commitment in educational development at all levels at LAMK and the institution demonstrates several good examples of quality management procedures and organizational design. However, on the whole there is a lack of coherent and explicit strategies ensuring the achievement of strategic educational goals. The quality management procedures for education neither offer sufficient opportunities for external stakeholders nor students to participate in and influence the quality development of the education at LAMK. The information use remains uneven and sporadic without a specific strategy-driven focus to guide development enthusiasm. A major weakness is the lack of explicit policies and procedures that support the operational level teacher's active engagement in quality development.

*The quality management of education is at an **emerging** stage.*

Quality management procedures are described in the Quality Handbook

The LAMK strategy defines the key objectives and indicators of educational and competence development. These include feedback on courses, feedback on programmes, self-assessments of curricula and faculties or units, and pedagogical reviews of individual fields of study as part of the annual planning process. At the LAMK level, assessment and development forums are organised annually on key strategic themes. Feedback is collected from graduates through follow-up monitoring of employment status one year after graduation.

More closely LAMK Strategy 2020 focuses on two major targets of which one is to be an "international reformer of future learning". This is to be achieved through cooperation with partners in both the labour market and in education, with students engaged in genuine work based development projects and student centred learning. Some of the present challenges addressed are the internationalisation of education, shorter graduation times, entrepreneurship, future competencies and innovation. The recently released Pedagogical Program 2016–2018 also

presents a comprehensive teaching philosophy where student centred learning, competence focused teaching/guidance, a learning environment (electronic Lahti UAS) and support services are integrated. The site visit shows that the vision and the Pedagogical Program is not fully supported by the quality management procedures for degree education.

Quality management procedures are structured according to the PDCA cycle and include core mechanisms in educational planning, implementation of teaching and study guidance followed by external and internal evaluations generating information for different development activities. Since 2012 LAMK has participated in more than seven international evaluations and a large number of internal evaluations (of for instance curriculum, organisational reform, RDI, faculties, workplace well-being, strategy and support services) all listed in the Quality Handbook. LAMK also conducts ten different student feedback questionnaires with varying frequency. All these evaluations generate information that are expected to form the basis for different Development Workbooks and development teams.

Once a year the staff, students and stakeholders are invited to faculties' quality meetings. The audit team believes the faculties' quality meetings are important forums for interaction between internal and external stakeholders and for exchanging and sharing views on quality issues and therefore a good practice. Few students, among the interviewed, did know about these meetings. Teachers were familiar with the procedure but this strategy though seems to mainly engage staff at the middle and top level of the organisation, leaving the information needs of the teachers and students unanswered. The Quality Handbook is therefore not completely in use amongst teachers and students.

Received documentation and interviews during the site visit showed that some development work is going on in the areas of entrepreneurship, work-integrated learning, e-learning and student support, but much of the efforts seemed unsystematic and ad-hoc. There is a lack of quality system implementation and commitment amongst teachers and students.

The Pedagogical Programme and the development teams provide a base for quality work

The Pedagogical Programme briefly describes the primary elements in the quality development of teaching and learning, but does not refer to the Quality Handbook for more detailed descriptions of procedures and responsibilities. This is a minor weakness but could cause a lack of operational overview for new or part time staff.

The Quality Handbook defines management procedures and responsibilities at all organisation levels from the Vice President to the Director for Education, in addition to the deans, coordinators of education, teachers, other staff and students. This confirms the overarching quality development idea that "we are all 'quality makers', every one of us". Pedagogical research on educational development confirms this idea, but the challenge lies in how to design procedures that make the expectations visible and empower the actors. At present the procedures do not fully engage all actors and this complicates the achievement of educational goals.

The education coordinators are, together with the deans, responsible for the quality of education conducted within their faculty. They are also members of different development teams. It also happens that sometimes coordinators are members of more than one different development teams. Development teams are mainly driven by the overall strategy and vision but also have a mandate to proactively initiate various forms of quality development. This is an excellent means of organisation supporting both harmonization of quality development procedures and cross-departmental learning. The audit team would however point out the risk of fragmentation and work overload for those engaged in the large number of development teams.

Teachers develop their work actively, but are less involved in quality management efforts

It is not that easy to grasp the specific teacher responsibilities. In the Quality Handbook it says that teachers and other staff “commit to the use of the joint quality system and are responsible for the quality and development of their own work” (p. 12). Further on in the text, it states that teacher responsibilities include course design, implementation and student feedback (p. 24). Evaluation and monitoring data is accessible in the Data Warehouse and there is a new electronic student feedback system.

The interviews with the teaching staff though gave evidence of teachers mainly focusing on their own teaching, a specific course and the importance of responding immediately to informal student feedback. Most of the work with student evaluations was described by teachers as ad-hoc and not documented, existing essentially outside the quality system. There are no structured introductions or support for new or part-time teachers which further reinforces the impression of an individual dependent education largely based on ad-hoc development activities. The electronic student evaluation system was not used due to low response rates.

During the site visit the audit team once and again met many engaged and ambitious teachers. They generally expressed a strong ambition and sense of responsibility to give students a positive and valuable learning experience. The idea of educational quality and actual teaching philosophy though seemed to vary between different disciplines and programmes and it was obvious that the Pedagogical Programme was not fully implemented. Students expressed their content with their teacher’s engagement and described good relationships and a secure and stimulating atmosphere. However, most of the students did not engage in evaluative activities or development work.

Current feedback systems do not fulfil education development needs efficiently

There are a number of student feedback channels used with variable degrees of commitment by staff and students. The weakest part of the information producing system is the link between course level actions and the faculty level Development Workbooks. The audit team sees there is a need for lower level procedures, tools and elements to complement the system. On a number of occasions during the site visit it was obvious that there was a gap between management and grassroots level information gathering and action strategies.

While top and middle management seemed to appreciate and make use of the information produced by the quality system, teachers and students gave evidence of only an ad-hoc and situation specific problem solving strategy not attached to the quality system information produced. The formal quality system, in effect, did not extend to the level of degree programmes. It was seen as bureaucratic and slow. Some of the teachers seem to lack trust in the quality system's ability to actually solve the issues. Development Workbooks were mentioned as important development tools at faculty level. In fact the audit team sees them as one potential solution to fix the gap between programme and faculty level quality management if their use is further enhanced. At the site visit the audit team got evidence of successful application of the Development Workbooks in the Master's Degree Programme in Entrepreneurship and Business Competence. This practice could be wider adopted in LAMK.

In spite of a multitude of evaluative activities the information provided by the quality system is as yet insufficient for the development of educational quality. Partly this is due to a lack of a prioritized and target-specific evaluation strategy, but also to a teaching practice mainly focused on specific course and single feedback events. This results in a contradictory situation of data overload concerning more strategic educational issues and information scarcity on the actual teaching practices and student experiences. The information use is sporadic and due to the data overload information collection seem to be much of an end in itself.

Participation in quality work varies between organisational layers

Meanwhile, there is a strong educational commitment at all levels of LAMK. This commitment is however expressed and utilised in different ways across the UAS. At the top level educational issues are regularly discussed in the Board, with external stakeholders and in the Executive group. Top management also highlight engagement in terms of a strong culture of "open doors" and informal feedback opportunities for everyone to use. The interviews during the site visit also gave clear evidence of stakeholder engagement in and appreciation of their ability to influence the education at LAMK. Their influence was however not that visible when talking to the teachers about the planning and implementation of educational provision.

The establishment of development teams was appreciated both by educational coordinators and staff from different key support services such as Library and Information services, Development services and international student support. It gave them valuable communication channels and the opportunity to cooperate on different issues. However the audit teams believes there is room for ensuring the systematic information exchange between the support services and education function. Based on the self-evaluation report and the interviews the audit team suggests LAMK to consider approaching support services more strategically and setting clearer targets for their development work.

Student feedback has occasionally generated development in support services, but the development work is mainly done "based on feedback through regular team meetings and development sessions" (Self-evaluation report, p 27). Neither the self-evaluation report, Quality Handbook nor Pedagogical programme clarifies the strategic role, quality ambitions and management

procedures for the support services in relation to education. In harmony with LAMK's holistic development strategy and value statements the audit team recommends a more strategic interest in student support services.

The general situation is a predominance of top and middle level engagement with accompanying opportunities to influence educational development. Few teachers seem to engage in systematic quality work at the study programme or department level. Teachers and students described a quality development culture almost totally dependent on semi-private communication with a course-specific focus. The lack of procedures and support for teacher's and student's engagement in the quality procedures is of special concern. This type of system is entirely dependent on the motivation and goodwill of the teacher. The course-specific focus also limits the development work to extinguishing fires and does not easily lend itself to solving issues no doubt experienced more commonly in the institution.

The motto of 'everyone being a quality maker' is only fulfilled if all concerned actors have the opportunity to take part in information production, the analysis and interpretation of data and the design of action plans. It is possible that the present information collection procedures suffer from a lack of contextual relevance. This could explain the use of alternative or ad-hoc evaluation strategies at the grass-root level.

6.2 Samples of degree education

6.2.1 Bachelor's Degree Programme in Design; Packaging Design and Branding

The quality management procedures related to the planning and implementation of educational provision are not fully functional and provide only partial support for effective quality work. A major element that limits the effectiveness of the quality management of the programme is the lack of documentation on quality related issues. While teachers appear to be pro-active in responding to students concerns, the programme lacks explicit policies and procedures ensuring that significant observations regarding the planning and implementation of education are recorded and shared appropriately. The majority of feedback channels available to student are of a semi-private nature and are often useful for a specific course only. The participation of part-time staff and external stakeholders in the planning phase of education is limited. However, the cooperation with external stakeholders is far more pronounced in the delivery of education, as the degree programme maintains a close connection with the world of work.

*The quality management of the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Design; Packaging Design and Branding is at an **emerging** stage.*

The Bachelor's Degree Programme in Design, with a major in Packaging Design and Branding, educates designers to carry out product development and branding. Packaging Design and Branding as a cross-disciplinary major subject was established in the early 2000s as a result of an increasing demand for designers with mastery in both graphic design and 3D design processes. Depending on their specialisation, students may find employment with advertising and design agencies, the packaging industry and manufacturers of branded products. The scope of the Bachelor's Degree is 240 ECTS credits, including courses on core and complementary competences. The current number of students is 58 (Spring 2016).

The number of part-time teachers creates a challenge for the planning of educational provision

Much of curriculum planning and revision is a principal responsibility of the teacher in charge of a course, which often poses considerable strain on their workload, especially in times when the curriculum undergoes major changes. On the programme level, curriculum planning is coordinated by the Principal Lecturer. According to the information in the self-evaluation report, teachers "find it difficult to perceive it as a key task to contribute to the curriculum...because a teacher's job description is typically formed around specific special competencies," (Self-evaluation report 2015, p. 54). During the site visit, it did not become evident that part-time academics have clear opportunities to provide input to the curriculum development. A related challenge is that "part-time teachers are not necessarily that interested in the development of major subject teaching and teaching methods, because they are not paid to do this" (SER, p. 57). As a result, the role of part-time staff appears to be limited to responsibilities linked solely to the implementation of education.

The programme has recently made efforts to improve the wellbeing of academic staff by organizing team meetings and personnel forums to address ongoing concerns. However, the programme should place more emphasis on ensuring that all academic staff have access to sufficient pedagogical training. Despite a considerable number of part-time teachers, opportunities for professional development and training are particularly limited for this group of academic staff. Failure to allow them access to the same training opportunities as full time employees may create discrepancies in the quality of planning and implementation of education. The audit team would therefore suggest the programme to increase the involvement of part-time staff in professional development training as a regular practice.

Interaction with students and external stakeholders relies on informal connections

According to the interviews, the participation of external stakeholders in the planning phase of the education appears to be limited. Industry partners are usually heard through informal discussion, whereas they are rarely involved in the actual planning of the curriculum. Cooperation with external stakeholders is more pronounced in the delivery of education, as the degree programme maintains a close connection with the world of work by hiring part-time teachers with relevant professional experience in an industry setting and by implementing project assignments and internships which students undertake in real businesses.

The students that the audit team met, were satisfied to have the opportunity for obtaining hands on experience in a private company, however, not all of them were satisfied with the actual experience they had. A number of the students mentioned having faced difficulties in the companies where they worked, as not all of the arrangements were met as planned by the organisation. Students are required to write a report about their internship placement; however, the assignment does not involve feedback from/to the work-place supervisor. It is usually up to the student to seek feedback from the company where they have had a placement. In similar terms, during the audit team's interview with an external partner of the programme, the lack of documentation on the internship processes was brought up as an area in need of improvement. The audit team would therefore recommend the programme to take better care of the implementation of the agreed contractual arrangements and revise the partnership contracts based on a systematically collected feedback from students, teacher supervisors and companies.

In regards to career guidance and preparation, students can seek advice from their teachers, but this process is largely unstructured. As a good practice, students complete an 'Identity of Designers' course and lectures on how to write a portfolio – which are centred towards the career interests and needs of students. The labour market relevance of the programme is monitored based on the employment rates of students, feedback from alumni and the experience that part-time teachers bring from the world of work. The students that the audit team met felt confident in being able to secure a work placement based on the competencies acquired from the programme.

Teachers and students cooperate in an open and enthusiastic way

The induction of students works well. Students are formally introduced to the programme at the beginning of the first year. Descriptions and requirements for each course are easily accessible online via a Moodle platform (Reppu). Course criteria, grading scales and assessment methods are given to students at the start of each course, and these are usually consistently followed during course delivery. The teaching methods in use are sufficiently varied and encourage innovative and creative learning. Although transparent arrangements appear to be in place for the assessment of students' performance, there is lack of programme level discussion on this issue. While the programme has recognized the challenges in assessing students work, currently there is no formal procedure in place to allow for fair comparison of grades and workloads across courses.

The impression of the audit team is that the relationship between students and teachers appeared to be close, cooperative and open, while the learning atmosphere seemed to be relaxed and positive. The students spoke about the programme as a rewarding and encouraging place of study and expressed high appreciation for the work of their teachers. Students feel comfortable to approach their teachers and ask for academic support, suggest an improvement or address an issue. This is certainly a result of the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers who seemed to be quite pro-active in responding to and dealing with students concerns and problems.

Systematic documentation and information sharing need to be enhanced

Students have the opportunity to provide online feedback after each course. However, the validity and usefulness of this feedback is somewhat questionable given that response rates are quite low. Other formal channels for collecting feedback include the faculty's quality meetings and annual opportunities to meet the dean. During the site-visit, most students were aware only of the use of informal channels to address a problem. The majority of feedback channels available to student at the programme level are of a semi-private nature and are often useful for a specific course only; whereas they lack effective use and documentation for the purpose of more systematic quality analysis and development of the overall programme. While informal and more discursive methods of feedback are useful tools for addressing day-to-day issues in programmes with a small number of students, they should be used to enhance rather than to supplant formal procedures.

A related challenge that restricts the effectiveness of the quality management of the programme is the lack of documentation on quality related issues – which has been recognised as a development target in LAMK's self-evaluation report. The programme lacks explicit policies and procedures ensuring that significant observations regarding the planning and implementation of education are recorded and shared appropriately. A significant amount of information is usually concentrated on one individual and it is difficult to see how the information would remain within the programme if a certain individual leaves the organisation. In this respect, the programme should improve its 'institutional memory' by introducing procedures that will allow the maintenance of recorded data as a regular and integral part of quality work.

6.2.2 Master's Degree Programme in Entrepreneurship and Business Competence

At LAMK the planning of programmes and teaching are strongly directed by the Strategy 2020, the Pedagogical Programme and the new policies related to the curriculum 2015–2016. The quality management of the degree programme in Entrepreneurship and Business Competence is systematic and supports the planning and implementation of the programme. The competence assessment is recognised at the course level and the assessment items, methods and criteria are described in the course syllabuses. The cooperation between the Master's degree programmes seems to be evolving. The degrees' relevance to the world of work is highlighted; the learning assignments are linked strongly to students' work places. Even though there are activities with external stakeholders, the cooperation between alumni and industry in terms of the development of the programme were not systematic. The quality management of the programme is functional, although at the operational level (teacher level) quality management relies heavily on informal oral feedback.

*The quality management of the Master's Degree Programme in Entrepreneurship and Business Competence is at a **developing** stage.*

LAMK have ten master's degree programmes in total. The profile of the Master's degree Programme in Entrepreneurship and Business Competence is intended for people who would like to develop their professional knowledge and competencies for management, expert and development roles in business and the public sector. The programme is aimed at those who have a relevant higher education degree and at least three years of work experience in the field, obtained after completing a degree.

The programme comprises common studies and complementary courses, which are elective studies chosen by the student. The thesis is a core component of the studies and it is implemented in the form of a research-based development project. There are 1–2 contact sessions per month. Online learning platforms are utilised in the programme to facilitate study alongside work.

The degree corresponds to the same European Qualifications framework level as other Finnish second cycle degrees. The degree consists of 90 ECTS credits. The number of students is 75 in the Spring 2016.

Evaluation and feedback systems produce relevant information for the planning of the programme

Educational and competence development key objectives and indicators are defined in LAMK strategy. The feedback on courses, feedback on programmes, self-assessments of curricula and faculties or units, and pedagogical reviews of individual fields of study are a part of the annual planning process. At the LAMK level, assessment and development forums are organised annually on key strategic themes. Feedback is collected from graduates through follow-up monitoring of employment status one year after graduation.

At the programme level the planning of the programme and teaching are strongly directed by the Strategy 2020, the Pedagogical Programme and the new policies related to the competence-based curriculum 2015–2016. The curriculum visualises the learning process and serves as a study planning guide for students.

The curriculum contents have been reviewed at approximately two-year intervals, based on the feedback collected. The programme consists of modules with clearly defined learning outcomes. During the interviews it was highlighted that the curriculum is a description of the learner's competence development process towards expertise in the field. The competence assessment is recognised at the course level and the assessment items, methods and assessment criteria are described in the course syllabuses.

In terms of quality management, the key evaluation methods of this programme include course feedback, graduate feedback, feedback received via supervision sessions, various cooperation meetings and communication channels with industry. The interviews confirmed that the willingness to collect qualitative data to improve the programme's aims, contents and methods is evident. Numerical indicators like the attractiveness of the programme (i.e. number of applicants, first choice applicants...), graduation time in 2 years, 3 years and 3+ years and Opala feedback for graduates, are well monitored at the programme level.

Interaction with the world of work is supported by formal and informal procedures

Both the self-evaluation report and the interviews stressed the degrees' relevance to the world of work; the learning assignments and the thesis process are linked strongly to the students' own work and workplace. If this was not possible, there was the possibility to produce a thesis also as a LAMK project.

Based on the interviews it was confirmed that the cooperation with companies is ongoing but it could be more systematic and strategic. Also the participation of the alumni in the development of this programme appears to be non-systematic. The thesis process and the student feedback were highlighted as key actions to define the programme's labour market relevance. The students and alumni interviewed agreed that the skills and competencies achieved good matches to the needs of the working world.

Industry representatives are heard at different levels of LAMK. One of the forums is the joint advisory board of the Lahti Master School which is an umbrella for master's degree programmes at the LAMK level. The quality meetings are the key forum for top management to meet students and staff from the programme. Industry representatives from companies and other stakeholders are invited to discuss the competencies of the students, the needs of business life and current news with LAMK management and staff members from the faculty. The meetings are organised annually.

Different quality mechanisms are recognised and used by the students and teachers

Most of the students work full time during studies and therefore it is important that cooperation between students, LAMK and the students' employers works well. Blended, work-related learning is used as the main pedagogical approach and the nature of the programme is learner-centred. Based on the interviews the cooperation between teachers and students seemed direct, informal and effective. The audit team suggest that a common quality procedure should be considered to deepen the quality of this kind of interaction since it is possible to lose important information between the teachers in terms of quality management.

The students seemed satisfied with the information and support given from the beginning of the studies; the students felt well informed about the expectations of the degree. The role of the personal study plan discussions and individual discussions at the start of the studies were highlighted during the interviews. The students also noted that the availability of key services (library, IT-services and guidance) was good.

Students participate in the programme's development by giving feedback under the quality process. The channels for providing feedback are well recognised (email, direct feedback, www-pages, via colleagues). The most effective and popular channel for feedback seemed to be informal and oral feedback. Because of the direct feedback mechanism at the teacher level the documentation of the received feedback differed between the teachers. However, the interviewees (students) verified that they are involved with quality work and they feel that the feedback given has an impact.

At the end of the course the lecturer collects feedback and learning reports from students which will be used in developing the course. The challenge seemed to be the students' quite low response rate in formal course feedback.

Teachers in charge were competent and the cooperation between them seems to work well. The quality of teaching methods is assured by various feedback surveys and assessments. LAMK has assessment criteria which are developed by the principal lecturers at the master's level. The evaluation methods and criteria of each course are specified in the course delivery plans. Overall the teaching and supervision methods seemed to be in line with the aims of the degree. LAMK also has a handbook for teachers to support teaching and ensure consistent quality of the supervision.

The main channel to involve the world of work is the students' workplace. The link between RDI activities and education are ensured through thesis and project activities. The courses are integrated, if possible, into workplace-oriented RDI projects which seemed to work well.

The quality work is effective with clearly defined roles

In this programme the quality management culture is evident and has an enhancement effect on the programme. The information provided by the quality system is sufficient for the development of the programme and the key responsibilities among the staff are clear and defined. At the strategic level the feedback procedures function, but at the teacher level a systematic process of documentation could be improved.

The audit team suggest that the quality of the international parts of the degree should be emphasised. It remained unclear how systematic and effective the cooperation between the alumni and small and medium sized companies is in terms of the development of the programme's quality overall.

However, the processes of the quality system seems to provide information needed for development activities as a whole. Overall, the quality system supports the planning and implementation of the education. The audit team suggest that the alumni experience especially should be taken more seriously in the process of the curriculum development.

6.2.3 Bachelor's Degree Programme in Mechanical Engineering

The quality management procedures of the degree programme have been insufficiently utilised to support the development of activities. The degree programme has faced a number of challenges that are visible from the indicators, but the quality system does not provide information on the reasons for problems and has neither demanded nor helped the staff of the programme to solve the issues yet. The degree programme has been quite independent of executing the LAMK quality measures. The participation of different groups in quality work is partial and depends on individual activeness. Students' participation in quality work is based on the course feedback system and unofficial oral feedback. LAMK quality measures for the participation of external partners are only partially in use. Participation is based on informal discussion within the projects and is not documented.

*The quality management of the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Mechanical Engineering is at an **emerging** stage.*

The size of the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Mechanical Engineering is 240 ECTS credits. Problem-based learning PBL, CDIO and project-based learning represent modern engineering education in the programme. The content of the programme aims to benefit the mechatronics cluster in the Lahti region. Currently there are 248 students in the programme (Spring 2016).

The planning of the programme would benefit from more analytical use of quality information

The current curriculum is based on a major reform in 2005. The execution of the curriculum is created around an annual project. The students take part in the project in 8 person teams. The courses are planned in a way that they support the project work. The students interviewed state that project based teamwork is meaningful and supports the learning best. Curriculum development has been led by the Coordinator of Education and the lecturer specialized in curriculum work. A large curriculum reform in LAMK will follow in 2017 led by the LAMK curriculum team.

There have been changes in curriculum of the programme after 2005. Changes are based on the staff's understanding of required skills, the functionality of teaching and on resources available. According to the audit team's findings the systematic analysis of the relevance of the skills the degree produces is however missing. Discussion with partner companies is described happening as informal interaction during the projects, and the impact on the curriculum is occasional. There is some evidence of the discussions' impact, though, for example machine simulation and 3D printing were added to the curriculum as a consequence of the discussions.

The measures to follow the quality of the education implementation are not fully utilised

According to the self-evaluation report and Quality Handbook, LAMK level curriculum team, that guides the overall curriculum development work, has a student representative. At the Faculty of Technology there has been students and staff participating the annual quality meetings. In the degree programme level the LAMK quality measures have been executed only partially. The students' participation actualises as by giving response to feedback questionnaires including course feedback and questionnaires for new students and graduates. The view of the audit team is that the use of the systems depends on the activeness of the both parties – students and teachers – and it also varies a lot. The interviewed students report unwillingness to fill them in as they do not see how it improves the quality of the education they receive. Furthermore, the questionnaires are seen as repetitive. As the response rates are low, their effectiveness remains low and the signals are weak.

According to the interviews the teachers rely mainly on direct feedback from students, but students report that sometimes they prefer keeping the information to themselves instead of making it an issue. The audit team sees this as a sign of a mistrust to the effectiveness of the feedback system. To cover up, the alternative methods of improving the problematic issues during the studies are preferred. In fact it was stated in the student interview that the most effective way of making a difference is to talk to the Dean of the faculty in person. The audit team sees that meet-the-dean procedure has been enhanced and supported by LAMK and it has proven to be successful in the Faculty of Technology helping the students to get their voices heard.

In the interview with the students it was mentioned that the workload compared to requirements of the courses varies according to the teacher. In the beginning of each course the objectives of the modules and the scale of how it will be evaluated are stated. The students know quite well what they are expected to learn, even though workload of courses tend to vary considerably between subjects with similar numbers of credits. This is recognized by both the teachers and students.

Peer assessment, self-assessment and course lecturer's assessment are the most used assessment methods. While there is common assessment framework and guidelines to harmonize the assessment in LAMK, both the teachers and students noted in the interviews, that there is some variation in grading.

The project learning is found useful by the students and they feel that the skills will be relevant when they graduate and go to work. This is enabled by the internships done in partner companies and on work experience to provide the basics in automation. According to the teachers interview the number of graduates hired in companies is considered as the best indicator of the quality of the programme. It is also stated that official result of the programme matching the needs of working life is available from the graduation questionnaire. The view of the audit team is however that the indicators used here are rather simplistic and limited. The audit team suggests a more elaborate way of approaching the quality such as relevant use of internal stakeholder feedback, information on student satisfaction, how students progress in their studies and how well they are fulfilling the learning objectives, could be used more efficiently.

Programme level challenges are recognized by the students and the teachers

The degree programme has faced a number of challenges, such as low attractiveness, slow progression of students (55 credits per year) and high drop-out rates. The challenges are visible from the on-time indicators (Table 2) and according to the system are followed by the line-manager every three months. The challenges of the programme are recognized in the LAMK level but remained hard to handle. According to the self-evaluation report, six development tasks are being planned to improve the results: alternative course methods; summer courses; active tutoring and study guidance; use of data provided of student progress; enhancing the programme's attractiveness; and the development of new modules to eliminate course fragmentation.

TABLE 2: Indicators for the Bachelor's Degree Programme in Mechanical Engineering.

	Pass rate 2014	55 ECTS credits per year	Dropout rate	1st applicants / one study place	Graduated in 5 years
2014	31/60	44 % 2013–2014	46 = 17,6 % *		
2015	44/60	47 % 2014–2015	21 = 8,5 % *	59/40 and 45/20	51 % (started 2011)

(Source: LAMK Data Warehouse from the staff intranet)

As seen on the Table 2, the dropout rate has improved from 2014 to 2015 but in the interviews there was no evidence or realization if the actions taken towards that were effecting the situation or not.

Study guidance is emphasized to improve the performance of the degree programme

Both students and teachers see that there is a big challenge in terms of the different starting points and prior competencies (mathematics, physics, languages and project work skills) of newly enrolled students. However the audit team found differences in opinions of the reasons behind the drop-out phenomenon in the programme. The teachers' view is that some students have difficulties in passing the courses which causes drop-outs and delays. According to the teachers this is due to the high standards and level of expectation in the courses and the programme. At the same time the students see that due to the low attractiveness, many non-motivated students enrol on the programme and therefore leave the studies to continue in another study place. The studies are not seen too difficult and the students feel they are able to pass and get good grades with a reasonable amount of work when willing to invest time and energy to it.

LAMK provides a large variety of services and support for students as the problems mentioned here are generally acknowledged, but the interviewed students did not recognize these services except for the orientation at the beginning of studies and tutor teachers support in the first year. Study

guidance is available for students, but according to the interviews the study counsellor is known only as a name from e-mails and the services are not familiar to the students. When asked in the interview, the students were not aware if there is support for learning difficulties. The attempt to develop the study guidance at the faculty level is a start and the audit team encourages to focus on the specific issues relevant also on the programme level.

The partnership agreements serve an important tool for quality management also at the programme level

One of the most important quality measure is the meeting with the project partners which is organised in the beginning and the end of a project. According to the site-visit interviews the meetings are conducted in an informal manner and conclusions are not systematically documented or discussed with partners, staff or students. The audit team cannot find evidence that the LAMK level partnership agreement procedure is applied according to its original purpose. Now it seems they are used only in some cases or with key partners and regarded more as a “letter of intent” instead of a concrete lists of actions that are purposefully evaluated and followed in cycles. Therefore the audit team suggests the partner agreement procedures to be more closely monitored and followed so that the use of them becomes actually more systematic.

As the programme sees itself as a competence developer for the mechatronics cluster of the region, the interaction methods with companies are expected to be wide and versatile. The audit team believes systematic and documented evaluation discussions with partners either annually or in all project phases might open up multiple ways of improving the quality and also finding new ways to co-operate at the curriculum level.

As a summary the audit team’s view is that the autonomy of applying the quality measures at the programme level has resulted in situation where development activities, improvement of the quality and solving problems rely on the spontaneous initiative which leads to the different actors only being partially involved in quality work and the use of the tools being unsystematic.

6.3 Research, development and innovation activities

The quality management procedures of RDI activities are functional and advance the achievement of goals of LAMK. They concentrate on monitoring the volume of activities and finance or the project planning phase. Emphasis is based on the need for increasing the volume of activities. Statement rounds and publication committee are examples of good practices to support the staff to improve the quality of action and at the same time document important information. Developing the data gathering has helped the workload of staff and currently there is relevant information available especially for management purposes. Instead more qualitative regional goals, actual quality of performing projects and participation of external partners get less attention in quality system. The interaction with students and external partners is vivid in different project phases but it could be more systematic for accumulating knowledge.

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

The quality system produces relevant information for the management and operational levels

The goals for research, development and innovation activities are set in the strategy 2020 via the RDI programme. In the faculties operational planning is set in the annual operating and financial plans. For RDI indicators the amount of external funding and publications of staff form the goals for finance indicators. Additionally, the number of ECTS credits earned in RDI projects is monitored.

RDI activities are required to promote the region's growth, competitiveness, well-being and employment opportunities in the focus areas. In recent years, the RDI activities in LAMK have been developed to form stronger links with education. In the interviews getting external funding was seen as the biggest challenge.

LAMK has developed its data systems during the past few years. Currently, they work quite well in monitoring the chosen indicators. Financial indicators are monitored using real-time information produced by the Data Warehouse. The data is available for all staff on the intranet, but is specifically monitored by directors and top management. The quality system also produces information for faculty management where the responsibility for RDI activities lies. Deans and RDI directors monitor the status of the RDI activities monthly in a joint meeting by analysing the indicators and projects' current situations, including pending applications, projects in progress and the financial status of the projects.

The assessment of qualitative goals is linked to the faculties' annual planning processes, including qualitative interim reviews of focus area activities, self-evaluations of each faculty and national and international external evaluations and action plans. The external evaluation of RDI led to reorganizing the RDI focus areas to improve the integration of RDI and education.

Quality of RDI is followed closely

The workload produced by the qualitative evaluations is a challenge. According to the interviews, there is not always enough time to analyse the results properly or implement them in practice. The decision making on which evaluations to take part in or what quality measures are crucial, does not seem to be based on a thorough analysis of the needs of the organisation. According to the audit teams view the measures for RDI function could be more defined as the current qualitative goals are quite vague. Cutting down and choosing meaningful and focused actions could be beneficial for the development work of the RDI function. Currently the responsibilities of the RDI quality management are scattered around LAMK to the faculties, focus area directors and the RDI director. The audit team also suggest to further ensure the link between RDI functions and the QUALITYteam.

Support mechanisms for staff focus on the funding application phase, which is also relevant for raising the volume of RDI. The statement round, taking place in the project management system, provides feedback from the faculty and focus area, and ensures the link with the LAMK strategy and analyses the required resources. In the interviews the round was seen as a good way of getting feedback from different persons. According to the audit team's view, external partners are not comprehensively involved in the statement round.

The publication committee was initiated to develop, evaluate and steer publishing activity. By the staff it is regarded as a support function for promoting writing and publishing competence.

In the execution phase of the projects, there are some quality measures which have had a positive effect on project managers' work, such as the automation of counting working hours in the project management system, which is the information required by funders and which is also usable information on the management level. Additionally, project steering groups, which are established for all projects, are considered a good way to improve the quality in projects.

Participation in quality work could be enhanced with more systematic use of existing good practices

In RDI activities all relevant personnel groups participate in quality work and there is evidence that the quality procedures enhance both management and staff in the achievement of goals in many ways.

According to the interviews with the partners, the steering groups and LAMK's feedback mechanisms in projects were not seen as the most important ways of interacting. External partners saw the interaction with the LAMK staff happens basically through unofficial discussions without systematic documentation. Nevertheless, the interviewed external stakeholders were satisfied with cooperating with LAMK. This was, because the staff was regarded as being open to discussion and making corrections whenever needed.

Student participation in quality development of the student projects happens through giving course feedback. Different teachers have invented individual ways to assess the learning or satisfaction of the customer in student projects, parallel to the quality system. As the feedback is not systematically registered the information does not accumulate. This means it is difficult to gain a holistic view if there are joint challenges with execution of projects. In addition it may lead to time consuming actions of correcting mistakes not providing good quality from the outset.

Currently there are many good practices with external stakeholders that could quite easily be turned into systematic and documented quality measures. For example, the assessment discussions with students and partners (for example in the Bachelor's Degree Programme of Design; Packaging Design and Branding) or the meetings of steering groups could be transformed into systematic joint assessment discussions in all projects' lifecycles. This would create a space where all the stakeholder groups could be systematically heard and the information from different angles could be collected together. In addition, systematic, regular and documented discussions with project funders, particularly regional funders, could add valuable information to the quality system.

Key support services for RDI include information and library services, communication services, RDI services, and accounting services. The RDI team provides training to support the staff to develop the RDI competences. In the interviews, the staff were satisfied with the support services for RDI, but no mentions of systematic means of analysing and improving the quality of support services was found in the self-evaluation reports nor in the interviews.

6.4 Societal impact and regional development work

LAMK is very active in regional development but the quality management procedures for the societal impact and regional development work are not yet systematically developed as a whole. LAMK's strategic objectives for societal impact and regional development work have been defined in close cooperation with the Lahti region and external stakeholders. The organisational structure to lead and manage regional development is clear and the top management is involved with regional cooperation. The information provided by the quality system is yet insufficient for the development of the function as some parts of the system are only recently developed. For example, the connection between LAMK's QUALITYteam and Regional Development team could be strengthened. Shared cross-sectorial understanding between the key functions and other staff needs to be increased.

*The quality management of societal impact and regional development work is at an **emerging** stage.*

The change in service logic challenges the functioning of the quality management procedures

LAMK's strategic objective for societal impact and regional development work has been defined in close cooperation with the Lahti region. The basis of the regional development at LAMK is to increase the role of the higher education activities in the promotion of the competitiveness of the Päijät-Häme region. The discussions during the interviews indicated that the understanding of the needs of the region is the foundation for LAMK activities in regional development.

The institution's Regional Development Programme 2020 states that the future success and well-being of LAMK's key customers depend on internationalisation, networking, the exploitation of new knowledge, unique multidisciplinary know-how, and innovative and creative development. The programme was drawn up in a communal process with different stakeholders and partners and is well linked to the Strategy 2020. With the programme LAMK defines its role as a regional developer. LAMK has also defined the criteria for strategic partnerships.

Before the regional strategy, regional development work was implemented through the two other core tasks of the institution; education and RDI. To strengthen the effectiveness and management of the regional work LAMK has both created functions (teams) which support the regional objectives and recruited a director for regional development. The director is responsible for the management and coordination of regional development activities. Overall the regional development work is coordinated by the Regional Development and RDI team, which consists of the corporate management of LAMK. Strategic management steers the operations. Regional impact is reported in the annual report on operations. The report findings are reviewed by regional development teams, the executive group and the board of LAMK.

The feedback procedures consist of a variety of different feedback mechanisms; based on the self-evaluation report the objectives are monitored and assessed through self-evaluations carried out by regional development teams as a part of annual planning, performance assessments, the

assessment and reporting of regional impact, customer feedback, faculties' quality meetings and evaluation meetings with strategic partners. Information received through monitoring and evaluations is used in the development of activities and in the setting of new targets.

Some of the feedback procedures for regional development (i.e. feedback meetings with alumni), were quite new. It seemed that LAMK is in the midst of the transformation process moving from traditional service logic to demand driven activities in regional development. Based on the interviews, the results of the activities are satisfactory, but the systematic approach to quality management in regional development is still not applied. Furthermore, the more focused set of indicators for regional development were under construction.

Quality management procedures are fragmented in the everyday regional development activities

The information provided by the quality system is as yet insufficient for the development of the social impact and regional development. At the strategic level the quality procedures appear to work, but at the operational, "hands on" level both the procedures and documentation were fragmentary. The quality processes of regional development seemed somewhat isolated from other quality activities of LAMK.

Overall, the societal impact and regional development of LAMK shows great commitment to the active impact and cooperation between the region, industry and other external stakeholders. Actions organised during recent years are strategically focused and are based on LAMK's strengths. However, the quality system behind those activities is fragmented and needs to be improved more systematically. During the interviews it was mentioned that the development of the CRM system and indicators of the regional development are in process. Systematic implementation of these measures will help to improve the quality management of the function.

The strengths and weaknesses of the quality management for regional development were well identified in the self-evaluation report. In the field of regional development there are activities and elements of quality management, but they are not always approached systematically as the interaction is wide and active but also informal. As a consequence the quality system does not seem to provide enough information for developing regional development activities as a whole. The audit team suggests that a systematic procedure between regional development teams and the QUALITYteam should be implemented in order to increase understanding between quality work and regional development quality management.

According to the self-evaluation report, regional development is supported by a number of key functions based on the defined roles of LAMK. The key functions which support the regional objective are: strategic regional activities, stakeholder activities, foresight activity, services for businesses and communities and the promotion of entrepreneurship, international transfer of knowledge, and the development of workplace-oriented learning and RDI environments.

The regional development teams carry out a self-evaluation of regional development activities each year. Since the first evaluation was carried out in autumn 2015, there was no evidence of the development of the services based on the evaluations. Regional impact of these services is reported in the annual report on operations. According to the self-evaluation the findings are reviewed by regional development teams, the Executive Group and the Board of LAMK.

Participation in quality work is based on active but informal dialogue

External stakeholders confirmed that LAMK collects a great amount of feedback from them. There was also evidence from the interviews that feedback given has also had an impact. Especially the communication provided by the LAMK was highlighted; external stakeholders seemed to be pleased with the communication and feedback procedures organised by LAMK. The interview confirmed that external stakeholders know how to contact LAMK and how to express their views.

The students are involved in regional development mostly through thesis and project related activities. The courses are integrated, if possible, into RDI projects which seemed to work especially well at the master's degree level. However it was not systematically defined how to benefit from the students' activity and how to reach the needs of the stakeholders and integrate them as the part of the quality work in regional development and societal impact activities.

LAMK is a member of the strategic Federation of Universities of Applied Sciences (FUAS), together with Häme and Laurea Universities of Applied Sciences. The Federation operates in the greater Helsinki metropolitan area. One of the four strategic areas of cooperation is Services for Companies and Communities. Based on the interviews, the cooperation seemed to work smoothly, but there was no evidence available as to how the services had been designed based on the feedback received during the recent years or how the companies and communities have experienced these joint services overall.

Overall, the cooperation with companies seemed to work quite well. At the organisational level the feedback on cooperation with businesses is collected through work placements, projects and in the thesis writing process. According to the self-evaluation, the feedback model with employers and alumni is mainly oral and informal. The interviewees confirmed that this was felt to have more impact than the statistical feedback which came from different surveys. From the quality assurance point of view, it remains uneven and hard to follow how effective the model is in the long run, even though the actions taken seem successful. The audit team did not find clear evidence that the feedback was used to develop or design cooperation with public or private sector employers (including SMEs) in a systematic manner.

The audit team acknowledges that documentation of informal discussions is also essential; the data gathered should be documented and put to wider use. To strengthen the quality management of the regional activities at LAMK the customer relationship management system should be taken into full use in every faculty.

Faculties' quality meetings are important forums for interaction and quality work

As a good practise the audit team would like to mention the faculties' quality meetings. The industry representatives from companies and other stakeholders are invited to discuss the competencies of the students, the needs of business life and current news with LAMK management and staff members from the faculty. The meetings are organised annually.

Also the quality management of the Open University and continuing education seems to function effectively. Systematic information is gathered and analysed for making decisions regarding upcoming implementation and whether a programme will be implemented or not. It was highlighted that the active discussion with companies and other stakeholders has increased the volume and feedback in the field of continuing education. The informal and perhaps spontaneous feedback practices seemed to function well for this purpose. The audit teams suggests that feedback received from companies would be shared with other regional teams and followed by actions focusing on development purposes.

As a smaller detail related to the quality system of regional development, the system does not seem to provide much useful information for developing alumni relations at the UAS level. From the Alumni perspective, all alumni have possibility to give feedback via online survey. The feedback received are reported and checked by directors in the regional development and the RDI team. However there was no evidence from the audit material how the feedback is used for the developing purposes both for alumni relations and for the core duties. The mechanism for feedback prioritise face to face meetings, communal planning and evaluation meetings; in further discussions it was stated that information is collected using new methods which is why there is currently no fully comparable data available. The quality management procedures for the alumni work seem to be somewhat fragmented.

7

Student entrepreneurship

Student entrepreneurship is derived from LAMK's strategic mission. The key targets of the current strategy period for student entrepreneurship do not capture the richness of how the entrepreneurship concept is articulated and understood. The Student Entrepreneurship Programme is based on a wide variety of ad-hoc and more systematic feedback collection methods, but does not yet constitute a coherent and focused system. Because the programme is new, there is not yet evidence of its impact. Students, teachers, and external partners have a meaningful role in developing student entrepreneurship and the role of students is increasing in supporting voluntary-based student-driven developments in entrepreneurship related initiatives.

*The quality management of student entrepreneurship is at an **emerging** stage.*

7.1 Functioning of the quality management procedures

LAMK has chosen Student Entrepreneurship as its optional audit target. As part of LAMK's mission to educate successful professionals and strengthen the region's skills base, competitiveness and wellbeing, LAMK aims to develop entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is one of LAMK's strategic profiles (the other two strategic profiles are *Experiments, protos and demos*, and *Transformative learning*). The idea of choosing these three profiles is to demonstrate originality and differentiate LAMK from other universities of applied sciences. The entrepreneurship concept was first defined in spring 2014 with the formulation and adoption of the Student Entrepreneurship Programme (SEP).

The definition for entrepreneurship in LAMK needs to be specified in a meaningful way

LAMK defines that "entrepreneurship promotes the refinement and commercialisation of innovative product and service ideas". It is believed that entrepreneurship, productization of skills, and an entrepreneurial attitude enhance employability and the potential for success. Moreover,

according to LAMK entrepreneurship results in the ability to combine different skills, utilise networks, and assess business risks. One of the objectives is to foster students' professional identity and practical skills.

The audit team finds that the concept entrepreneurship is linked to many issues, such as skills (productization, networking, assessment of risks, practical skills, etc.) and psychological attributes (attitudes, professional identity, etc.). It is not clear whether LAMK sees entrepreneurship as something that an individual has (traits, characteristics) or something that individuals do (specific functions). Higher education institutions that have defined entrepreneurship in a meaningful way for their own context have generally also succeeded in developing their own profile in this respect. The audit team would recommend that LAMK defines and specifies entrepreneurship in a way, which is clear, easily understandable, and meaningful in LAMK's own context.

The SEP is made of a collection of measures, networks, and development areas, which foster student entrepreneurship. More specifically, the entrepreneurship concept is made of (i) education; (ii) RDI services; (iii) entrepreneurship experiments and student enterprises; and (iv) cooperation with businesses. An entrepreneurship profile team has the operational responsibility of developing the SEP. It is made of staff members and representatives from the Lahti Region Development LADEC and student cooperative company.

The development cycle has not yet completed

An annual plan is developed for the SEP that includes key development measures and monitoring methods. The first time an annual plan was made for the SEP was for 2016. The implementation of the plan is intended to be evaluated at the end of each year. The current strategy period has two targets related to the entrepreneurship profile, namely (i) building an active role for LAMK in the regional ecosystem, and (ii) promoting student entrepreneurship. In regards to the former, the target stated for 2017 is that LAMK will operate in the ecosystem as a coordinator and expert of higher education-based entrepreneurship. In regards to the latter, the target stated for 2017 is that students will have earned a total of 2000 ECTS credits in the entrepreneurship study pathway (700 ECTS in 2015) and launched 45 businesses per year (25 businesses per year in 2015).

The audit team believes that the first target could refer to an administrative role or being a legitimate actor in the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. Indeed, to be a regional coordinator can be just an administrative function that other higher education units carry out for one institution. Or, it may also refer to a position gained through credibility and legitimacy as an entrepreneurship promoter in the regional ecosystem. It is not clear what LAMK's position is vis-à-vis these two alternatives. Moreover, the Self-Evaluation Report (LAMK, 2015) mentions that LAMK already coordinates the regional cooperation in student entrepreneurship. If this was the case already in 2015, then to set the same target for 2017 is hardly very ambitious or something that would drive LAMK to work on the achievement of this target. While it is not the task of the audit to comment on the choice of targets as such, it is, however, important that LAMK develops such indicators for the first target that would push the organisation to improve its operations on continuous bases.

The second target and its measure (study credits in entrepreneurship), while being easy to measure and follow the development over time, does not seem to measure several of the key qualities LAMK would like to develop in students, such as the introduction of innovative products/services, the acquisition of networking, productization, risk assessment skills, or the development of entrepreneurial attitudes among students. Instead, the measures seem to focus narrowly on ECTS study credits and number of (any kind of) new start-ups. Moreover, the Self-Evaluation Report (LAMK, 2015) specifies that all students have to take entrepreneurship courses. As a consequence, counting the increase in study credits, which are obligatory for students, hardly measures increased student entrepreneurship, other than from an administrative point of view. If LAMK wants to promote the development of entrepreneurial qualities in their students, it would be, at least, as important to develop suitable indicators to measure whether the SEP develops the needed qualities in students (e.g. entrepreneurial intentions, attitudes, competencies, skills, etc.), and how these qualities develop over the study years. More importantly, the audit team would recommend that LAMK closely follows how students' *voluntary* engagement in entrepreneurship develops during their study years. To this end, LAMK could develop instruments to measure and follow how the different teaching approaches change/develop students' entrepreneurial qualities over the study years.

The quality mechanisms function as separate processes

Currently feedback about student entrepreneurship is collected in several ways. For example, meetings with businesses on regional development provide feedback. User feedback on the services and learning environment is received from students directly in day-to-day activities. While the previous feedback collections are non-systematic in nature, LAMK has also implemented some systematic reviews and feedback surveys. In fact, most of the feedback surveys (e.g. course feedback surveys, quality feedback on degree programmes, the employment survey one year after graduation, etc.) include questions related to entrepreneurship and the development of entrepreneurial skills. Also, a separate entrepreneurship survey was conducted in March 2014, and it will also be conducted again in 2016. Finally, RDI activities focusing on entrepreneurship (their number and quality), the volume of project funding, the work satisfaction of teachers and other personnel, NY enterprise activities, student cooperative company activities, and Protomo collaboration are also used to measure the quality, scope and impact of student entrepreneurship.

The Self-Evaluation Report (LAKM, 2015) acknowledges that because the Student Entrepreneurship Programme is new, no evidence of its impact is available. The audit team considers that the current collection of indicators and methods of collecting the needed information about the implementation of the annual plan are not clear, nor very systematically organised. Furthermore, it was not clear how systematically the collected feedback is analysed and used to develop the activities in SEP. LAMK seems to be aware of these issues.

In the future, it would be important for LAMK to develop a more limited number, but well focused set of indicators. It should also focus on few key feedback collection methods, and carry them out systematically in collaboration with other actors in the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. A central question LAMK should try to answer could be "Are we developing the entrepreneurial

qualities of all our students during their study time in LAMK, and what kind of entrepreneurial impact our alumnus have in the working life?” For example, the separate survey on entrepreneurship, which was implemented for the first time in 2014, could be adopted permanently to follow how entrepreneurial qualities develop during study time. This kind of tool could also be generalized across different study programmes in LAMK.

7.2 Participation in quality work

Entrepreneurship activities are coordinated by the Entrepreneurship Profile Team

The Entrepreneurship Profile Team (EPT) has the operational responsibility for developing the SEP. Besides staff members, the Entrepreneurship Profile Team also includes representatives from Lahti Region Development LADEC and Student Cooperative Company. The EPT has regular meetings. The minutes of meetings were not available on the intranet.

According to the Self-Evaluation Report (LAMK, 2015), all faculties are actively involved in student entrepreneurship, and have integrated new forms of entrepreneurial activity into their education. The audit team found evidence during the interviews of the involvement of different faculties. Furthermore, students expressed having more options in terms of entrepreneurship.

LAMKES plays a central role in bringing students into the quality work of entrepreneurial activities

Students participate in developing the Student Entrepreneurship Programme by taking entrepreneurship courses and giving feedback on those courses. Students also have representatives in the EPT, Fellmannia HUB, and take part in the development of LAMK campuses. LAMK has also hired an intern, who participates in entrepreneurship development. Students have also created their own LAMKES Entrepreneurship Society to strengthen and develop student opportunities for entrepreneurial activities. The society’s mission is to bring together students and businesses. LAMK steers and monitors LAMKES activities through regular reporting.

The audit team believes that the Entrepreneurship Society (LAMKES) could become one key internal actor in fostering students’ voluntary engagement in entrepreneurial activities, and in developing new activities and events related to entrepreneurship. As such, it would be important for LAMK to succeed in empowering students so that student-driven voluntary-based entrepreneurship development takes a larger role in LAMK and in the region in developing student entrepreneurship. Student entrepreneurship is developed together with region’s business service network. Some of the services provided by regional actors are available for students (e.g. the Protomo services of LADEC). Regional businesses also participate in the development of student entrepreneurship through company guest speakers, company visits, work placements, and student thesis projects.

The quality system as a whole

The start of a fully independent quality system took in place in LAMK in January 2015 after a series of organisational and systemic changes. The quality system encompasses LAMK's core duties in some form or another but there is relatively little evidence of the system's impact on the development of the core duties. The development of the operations is based on an existing quality culture, but is in need of consolidation and more grass-roots engagement and empowerment. The quality management procedures at LAMK do not yet form a functioning and unified system.

*The quality system as a whole is at an **emerging** stage.*

8.1 Comprehensiveness and impact of the quality system

The quality management procedures related to the planning, implementation and evaluation of educational provision are not fully functional and provide only partial support for the quality work. There is a strong commitment to educational development at all levels at LAMK and the institution demonstrates several good examples of quality management procedures and organisational design, for example the Development Workbooks or master's level Coordination Board. At the same time the gaps in the official quality system (such as the course feedback system with low response rates) create a need to build local quality procedures and feedback loops beyond faculty level to develop the everyday work processes which do not accumulate quality related information and support the overall system development.

A major weakness of the quality system in the educational domain is the lack of explicit policies and procedures that support teachers' active engagement in the quality development. Moreover, the information provided by the quality system is relevant up to the faculty level but unevenly processed and used in the degree programmes. The information use is sporadic, and due to data overload, information collection seems to be much of an end in itself. There is also a predominance of top and middle level engagement with opportunities to influence the educational development.

Despite of the coordinating elements like QUALITYteam, the development activities at the operational level, which are undertaken with great enthusiasm by different staff members, are not easily identifiable and transferable to upper levels, because there are no efforts to systematically document or process these daily problem-solving actions. The most important quality procedures such as Quality Meetings and the Development Workbooks are faculty level tools that either remain distant or happen once a year. Even the one element of the quality system – the course feedback – that surpasses the faculty level, is regarded as repetitive and inadequate. This kind of system is vulnerable in the long run because of potential changes in personnel, variants in their level of enthusiasm, despite the fact that the quality of the work is good.

The quality management procedures related to research, development, and innovation activities are functional and advance the achievement of goals at LAMK. They concentrate on monitoring the volume of activities and finance or the projects planning phase, based on the need for increasing the volume of activities. The development of data gathering processes has eased and balanced the staff workloads and currently there is relevant information available especially for management purposes.

The quality management procedures related to societal impact and regional development work are not fully functional and provide only partial support for the quality work. The organisational structure to lead and manage regional development is clear and the top management is involved with regional cooperation. Although LAMK is very active in regional development, it does not yet manage the quality of these activities systematically or develop them as a whole. The information provided by the quality system is yet insufficient for the development of the work related to societal impact and regional development. For example, there are no systematic procedures between LAMK's QUALITYteam and Regional Development Team or the support services of the function.

8.2 Quality culture

LAMK has a communal vision and development oriented quality culture. LAMK defines that everyone is responsible for the quality and development of their own work. Among staff and students there is a dedication to continuously develop their own work, which is clearly demonstrated in audit material and especially the interviews. Teachers regularly invite direct feedback from students and then act on it, which is appreciated by the students. The solving of issues and problems at the operational level is not, however, processed systematically for future use, which would help to form and follow an aggregated picture of the issues and challenges in the concerned operations. The information gathering and development rounds do not necessarily link to each other when there is great eagerness to reach for new procedures, evaluations and improvement ideas.

While there is generally a strong commitment to quality issues, not all members of the organisation are fully familiar with their roles and responsibilities in the quality system. The system relies strongly on the “good will” and enthusiasm of individual actors and may be prone to break down when facing difficulties and the motivation is lost. The complex matrix of different development actors is difficult to comprehend and may lead to overlapping functions as well as information gaps.

The ambitious goals and high speed of the development of quality work over the past few years has meant heavy workloads for some key personnel. At the same time, others (mainly teachers and students) are not engaged in quality work with the same intensity. For example, the principal role of the students in the quality system seems to be reduced to being a feedback provider, rather than as equal 'quality makers' in the development of the quality system and decision-making. The quality system is in need of consolidation and more grass-roots engagement and empowerment.

8.3 The quality system as a whole

The quality system of LAMK serves the integral parts of the strategic management. Procedures for the use and communication of quality information works well at the top level but are not fully and evenly distributed in the rest of the organisation. The quality system is designed to support the core duties of the organisation but the widely-spread use of informal and parallel information channels results in latent information and unsystematic actions. The current quality system, its organisation, and responsibilities need simplification and streamlining, and more focus on the implementation at all organisational levels.

9

Conclusions

9.1 Strengths and good practices of the quality system

Strengths

- People's enthusiasm and commitment to immediate improvements are strong at all levels of the organisation and this makes a solid foundation for the future improvement.
- A strong common quality culture is based on open and transparent information. The quality culture has substantially improved since the first audit.
- The relationship between students and teachers appeared to be close, cooperative and open, which reflects the core value of the system: "We are all quality makers," while the learning atmosphere is relaxed and positive.
- The President and Executive Group have adopted active roles in handling quality related issues.
- The information systems produce relevant and up-to-date information for the use of the top management.
- There is evidence of many functional quality management procedures that advance RDI activities and the achievement of the RDI goals.
- Defined roles and the responsibilities for work concerning regional development and societal impact give a solid ground for building the quality system of the function.
- The FUAS co-operation and external evaluations have proven to be an important learning experience for LAMK as the first independent quality system has been constructed. The existing quality management procedures and tools of LAMK present a good basis for streamlining and further implementation to form a functional quality system.

Good practices

- The Development Workbooks, which describe current development objectives in a condensed manner, provide a good basis to document and support the progress monitoring of objectives which have arisen from the various feedback and evaluation channels at faculty level. Given their relative success, their use could potentially be extended to programme level.
- The development teams enable crucial information exchange and dialogue between faculties, actors and institutional levels.
- The Pedagogical Programme is a good tool for collaborative development and it supports strategic ambitions.
- The statement round in RDI projects is meant to ensure strategic focuses in alignment with the strategy, links with the education and adequacy of resources.
- Faculties' quality meetings are important forums for interaction between internal and external stakeholders and for exchanging and sharing views on quality issues.
- The feedback mechanism and service model of further education is effective and is a good example of a functioning systemic structure.
- FUAS cooperation is a good example of inter-organizational learning and sharing in the development of the quality system.
- The joint advisory board of the Lahti Master School harmonizes the development of the master's degree programmes. Similar procedures could be considered also for the bachelor level education at LAMK.

9.2 Recommendations

- The roles and responsibilities in some parts of the quality system are complex and need clarifying. For example, in RDI-functions the decision making on quality issues is divided between five actors in the organisation. The problems and challenges faced at the operational level (e.g. evidenced by teacher-student informal exchanges) could be documented more systematically to form an aggregated picture of operations.
- The volume of information produced by the system poses challenges in the analysis phase. Procedures for systematic information gathering, communication and use should be improved.
- The current quality system is only partially in use at the degree programme level and that has enabled the continuance of problems in some programmes. Developing the layer of the quality system underneath the faculties with concrete elements would help to increase the engagement of the staff and students to the system as a whole.
- The current quality system has enough elements (e.g. procedures, tools). There is no immediate need to develop new elements for the quality system itself. Instead, the focus should be on simplification, streamlining, and implementation of the different aspects of the quality system at all organisational levels and units. The audit team recommends to develop procedures that would support the evaluation of the quality system as a whole.

- The role of the QUALITYteam can be strengthened and more qualified by engaging it in more strategical issues to cover all the core duties of LAMK including RDI.
- The evaluative activities (internal and external) should be prioritised better in accordance with the strategic objectives.
- The audit team suggest that the cooperation between the regional development teams and the QUALITYteam is strengthened to ensure that the institutional quality policy is well applied across different teams.
- In order to monitor and support the attainment of LAMK's qualitative goals there is a need for more qualitative information measures to complement the quantitative ones in use.
- The audit team is concerned that the current student feedback does not produce relevant information about the quality of learning. The student feedback system should be re-designed, firstly, to make it less overwhelming and redundant for students, and secondly, to work in a meaningful way as an integral part of the quality system.
- To continue developing the quality culture, LAMK could focus on empowering key support staff (including quality coordinators), students, and teachers so that they would be central actors in quality system development, rather than passive feedback providers and local problem fixers.
- The cooperation with companies should be more systematically documented and analysed. Defined indicators are needed to measure the impact of the actions taken in the field of regional development.

9.3 The audit team's overall assessment

Based on this report the audit team concludes that Lahti University of Applied Sciences' quality management procedures do not yet form a unified and functioning system. The quality system as a whole is at the emerging stage when measured against FINEEC's audit criteria.

Because the quality system as a whole does not reach the developing stage, the audit team recommends that the quality system of Lahti University of Applied Sciences be subject to re-audit. The audit team recommends that the re-audit should concentrate on

1. the quality system's link with strategic management focusing on the
 - a. procedures for the use and communication of quality information
 - b. system functioning across the different institutional levels and units
2. the development of the quality system
3. the quality management of degree education and
4. the quality system as a whole.

9.4 Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision

In its meeting on 13 June 2016, the Higher Education Evaluation Committee decided, based on the audit team's recommendation and on the audit report, that the quality system of Lahti University of Applied Sciences does not meet the criteria set for quality systems. Thus, the development of the quality system requires actions from the institution and a re-audit.

The re-audit will focus on the following audit targets, as set in the audit manual for the quality systems of higher education institutions 2015–2018:

1. the quality system's link with strategic management emphasizing the involvement of all institutional levels and units, and
2. the quality system as a whole.

The quality system of Lahti University of Applied Sciences will be re-audited in two to three years from the decision of the Higher Education Evaluation Committee.

APPENDIX 1: Table of the audit targets and criteria

TARGETS	CRITERIA			
	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
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 clearly defined and the result of an inclusive process. • The quality policy is accessible to all internal and external stakeholders, taking their information needs into account. • The quality policy is clearly 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

	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
4. Quality management of the core duties, including essential services supporting these 4a) Degree education 4b) Research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities 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) 4d) Optional audit target	<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 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 FINEEC	18 March 2015
Appointment of the audit team	19 October 2015
Submission of the audit material and self-evaluation report	30 November 2015
Information and discussion event at the HEI	8 January 2016
Audit visit	23–25 February 2016
Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision on the result	13 June 2016
Publication of the report	13 June 2016
Concluding seminar	15 June 2016
Re-audit in two to three years	2018–19
Follow-up on the development work of the quality system	2021–22

APPENDIX 3: Programme of the audit visit

Tuesday 23 February 2016	
9.00–10.15	Interview of the top management (1)
10.25–11.10	Interview of the board (2)
11.20–12.10	Interview of deans (3)
12.10–13.00	Lunch
13.00–13.50	Interview of support staff (4)
14.00–14.50	Interview of student entrepreneurship related activities (5)
15.00–15.50	Interview on quality management (6)
16.00–16.50	Interview on RDI activities (7)
Wednesday 24 February 2016	
9.00–9.50	Interview of staff of the Bachelor's Degree programme in Design; Packaging Design and Branding (8)
10.00–10.50	Interview of students on the Bachelor's Degree programme in Design; Packaging Design and Branding (9)
11.00–11.50	Interview of staff of the Master's Programme in Entrepreneurship and Business Competence (10)
12.00–13.00	Lunch
13.00–13.50	Interview of students on the Master's programme in Entrepreneurship and Business Competence (11)
14.00–14.50	Interview of staff of the Bachelor's Degree programme in Mechanical Engineering (12)
15.00–15.50	Interview of students on the Bachelor's Degree programme in Mechanical Engineering (13)
Thursday 25 February 2016	
9.00–09.50	Interview of external stakeholders (14)
10.00–10.50	Interview of students (15)
11.00–11.50	Thematic interview on pedagogical development (16a)
11.00–11.50	Interview related to the regional development impact activities (16b)
12.00–13.00	Lunch
13.00–14.00	Audit team meeting
14.00–15.00	Final interview and preliminary feedback to the top management (17)

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 assurance and to demonstrate that functional and consistent quality assurance 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 for Lahti University of Applied Sciences and the results of the audit.

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