The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre has conducted an audit of National Defence University and has awarded the institution a quality label that is valid for six years from 13 March 2017. The quality system of National Defence University fulfils the national criteria set for the quality management of higher education institutions and corresponds to the European quality assurance principles and recommendations for higher education institutions.

The object of the audit was the quality system that the institution has developed based on its own needs and goals. The freely selected audit target chosen by the institution was continuing education.

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

- The quality assurance system of the National Defence University is comprehensive and it also steers the operations of the organisation in an effective manner. The system is an integral part of the organisation's operations management and its procedures are clear and well established. The quality assurance system is implemented well at different levels and in different parts of the organisation.

- The responsibilities of the main actors laid out in the quality assurance system are clearly defined, which supports the development work carried out at the National Defence University. The personnel, the students and the most important stakeholders are comprehensively involved in the quality assurance work and they make an important contribution to the functioning of the process.

- Different personnel groups at the National Defence University have internalised the quality assurance system and its management practices. In particular, the process-based operating approach and thinking has been successfully applied in practice. The procedures for familiarising staff members with quality assurance are systematic and well established.
Among others, the following recommendations were given to National Defence University:

- The quality assurance system of the National Defence University provides a comprehensive tool for ensuring basic operational standards and for preventing quality deviations. The audit team urges the National Defence University to consider new innovative approaches and to establish procedures that can serve as a basis for excellence in training and research.

- It is important to make feedback more effective and to ensure that it is utilised when operational improvements are planned. Feedback should be collected less frequently and it should concern more wide-ranging issues. In addition to carrying out surveys to collect feedback, the National Defence University should also consider collecting information by means of focus group discussions. A more effective feedback system would also make the respondents more motivated to take part in the development work.

- The National Defence University should develop ways that encourage students to become more extensively involved in the planning and development of contents and delivery of education. This would allow the students to develop their competences, which they would be able to use in education activities as officers.

**Keywords**
Audit, evaluation, higher education institutions, quality, quality management, quality system, university