

Abstract

Published by

Finnish Education Evaluation Centre

Name of Publication

Auditering av Högskolan på Åland 2018 (Audit of Åland University of Applied Sciences 2018)

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The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre has conducted an audit of Åland University of Applied Sciences and has awarded the institution a quality label that is valid for six years from 23 August 2018. The quality management system of Åland University of Applied Sciences 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 management system that the institution has developed based on its own needs and goals. The freely selected audit target chosen by Åland University of Applied Sciences was Open University of Applied Sciences.

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

- The quality management system enhances participation. The system is easily accessible and transparent.
- The structure of the quality management system with management reviews, process group meetings and internal audits supports quality work.
- The operations of Åland University of Applied Sciences are integrated in the surrounding society and are in general characterised by a systematic approach in gathering feedback from the labour market on the operations of the institution.

Among others, the following recommendations were given to Åland University of Applied Sciences:

- The quality management system is document-oriented and has a strong focus on process descriptions. The continuous development of operations and the connection with strategic objectives should be more strongly emphasised in the system. It is recommended that the emphasis is shifted from system development to development of operations.
- The institution needs to ensure that that the central parts of its quality management system, such as programme boards, advisory boards and development discussions, work as intended.
- The counter feedback to students should be systematised.

Keywords

Audit, evaluation, higher education institutions, quality, quality management, quality system, university of applied sciences