

# Substantive Change Report

## by Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC)

Register Committee

Ref. RC/C49

Ver. 1.0

Date 2020-03-02

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Decision of:	02/03/2020
Report received on:	13/12/2019
Agency registered since:	18/11/2010
Last external review report:	13/02/2017
Registration until:	28/02/2022
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Beate Tremml, Riitta Pyykkö
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Substantive Change Report of 13/12/2019</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Additional explanation of 20/12/2019</a></li> </ol>

1. The Register Committee considered the Substantive Change Report of 13/12/2019 and additional explanation of 20/12/2019.
2. The Register Committee noted that FINEEC introduced a new audit model to be carried out between 2019 and 2024.
3. The Register Committee considered the mapping of criteria for FINEEC audits compared to the ESG Part 1 and concluded that the model addresses all elements of ESG 1.1 to ESG 1.10.
4. The Register Committee took note that stakeholders have been involved in creation of methodologies, standards and criteria during the planning phase in 2016. The Register Committee further took note that FINEEC organised meetings, seminars and workshops with stakeholders. The new audit model was also piloted during 2018-2019 and discussed with the main stakeholders prior to its approval by the Higher Education Evaluation Committee.
5. The Register Committee took note that the new model includes a site visit and a follow-up procedure. The Register Committee noted that the audit manual is published and available to the public.
6. The Register Committee noted that the new audit procedures are carried out by audit teams which include a student expert.
7. The Register Committee noted that the new criteria for outcomes include a three scale evaluation, instead of four, which is clearly

described in the FINNEC's Audit manual, published on its website. Consistency is ensured through the Higher Evaluation Committee, which takes the final decision on the basis of the audit's team report and the meeting with the chair of the audit team.

## Register Committee

8. The Register Committee noted that audit reports are being published on FINEEC's new digital platform.
9. The Register Committee noted that FINEEC introduced an appeals procedure to address a review of an audit result.
10. The Register Committee further underlined that a full assessment of the audit procedure is to be carried out as a part of FINEEC's next review.

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## EQAR Substantive Change Report

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Is the change you are reporting a merger that involves other organisations than the reporting agency/ies mentioned above (i.e. that are not registered on EQAR)?	No
A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed? This might include:  changes to the legal form or status; merger with/into another body/entity, another body/entity becoming part of the agency; changes in parent entity, if applicable; liquidation, bankruptcy or similar proceedings.	No
B. Has the organisational structure changed? This might include:  role or composition of governing or managing bodies (only changes of the general composition/membership categories – there is no need to report regular changes of individuals, e.g. when their terms end); establishment or discontinuing of governing or managing bodies; major/drastic changes in the staffing or financial situation; outsourcing of activities with significant relevance for the agency's external quality assurance activities.	No
Are there new types of activities?	No

Are there changes in existing activities (e.g. changes to their methodology, criteria or procedures)?

Yes

Have some or all existing activities been discontinued?

No

Please describe the following key aspects of the new and changed activities:

purposes and development of the activity, involvement of stakeholders (ESG 2.2) criteria used, how they were developed, measures implemented to ensure consistency, how ESG 1.1 – 1.10 are reflected in the criteria (ESG 2.1 & 2.5) review team composition, selection, appointment and training of reviewers (ESG 2.4) site visits (ESG 2.3) publication of reports (ESG 2.6) follow-up (ESG 2.3) appeals system (ESG 2.7) embedding in thematic analyses and internal quality assurance of the agency (ESG 3.4 & 3.6)

For new activities, please explain if they were developed from scratch or on the basis of existing activities that were subject to the last external review.

FINEEC has the new audit model for new audit round 2019-2024. The methodology is the same (based on enhancement-led evaluation) and the main focus is also same: the functionality and effectiveness of the quality systems of HEIs and procedures used by the HEI to maintain and enhance the quality of its activities.

The new model is based on ESG.

The purpose of the new audit model is 1) to evaluate the quality work in the HEI meet the European quality assurance standards. 2) to asses whether the quality system procedures produces relevant information fo the implementation of the strategy amd the contunuous development of the HEI's activities, and whether it results in effective enhancement activites. 3) to encourage internationalisation, experimenting and a creative atmosphere at HEIs and 4) to accumulate open and tranparent information on quality work at HEIs.

The new elements are:

- 1) The evaluation areas assessed using three scale: excellent, good and insufficient (the scale used to be 4 scaled)
- 2) The evaluation area has renewed (see more from the audit model manual pages 11-16).
- 3) The total new element is a digital audit platform, which functions as a public template for the self-assesment.
- 4) The other new element is benchlearning as a part of evaluation. The purpose of benchlearning is to receive feedback on the own organisation's activities and to learn from the good practices of another organisation. The HEI selects a target and a partner for benchlearning.





FINNISH EDUCATION  
EVALUATION CENTRE

# **FINEEC'S SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REPORT TO EQAR**

**FINEEC'S AUDIT MODEL  
2019-2024**

20 December 2019

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## 1 Introduction

The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) is responsible for the external evaluation of universities and universities of applied sciences (UAS) in Finland. The three key evaluation types are the quality audits of higher education institutions (HEIs), thematic evaluations and engineering programme accreditations. FINEEC has conducted two full cycles of quality audits of Finnish higher education institutions (2005-2011 and 2012-2018) and the third cycle of quality audits is underway (2019-2024).

## 2 The planning process of the FINEEC audit model 2018-2024 (ESG Part 2.2)

### ESG STANDARD 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE

#### Standard:

*External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.*

#### FINEEC Compliance:

The planning of the new audit model took place in 2016. A planning team appointed by the Higher Education Evaluation Committee was responsible for the planning of FINEEC's audit model 2018-2024. The planning team had representation of both higher education sectors in Finland, students and working life. The members of the planning team were:

Chair, professor Jouni Välijärvi, University of Jyväskylä  
Quality manager Hannele Keränen, University of Applied Sciences Lapland  
Rector Turo Kilpeläinen, University of Applied Sciences Kajaani  
Student, Anna Mäkipää, University of Applied Sciences Turku  
Vice-dean Mirja Ruohoniemi, University of Helsinki  
Innovation director Petri Räsänen, Council of Tampere region  
Head of HEI unit Helka Kekäläinen FINEEC  
Secretary, counsellor of evaluation Mafi Saarilampi, FINEEC

The ESG 2015 guided to a large extent the planning of the model.

The main stakeholders were involved and consulted during the process. Numerous consultation meetings, seminars, workshops and other events were organised during the planning phase (see picture 1 below) and later to present and discuss the model. For instance, FINEEC staff members have presented and discussed the new model at several HEIs. The new audit model has also been introduced and discussed at annual seminars organised by FINEEC (2016-2019). The participants of these national seminars included a multitude of HE representatives such as quality managers, rectors and students.

The Higher Education Evaluation Committee approved the audit model 2018-2024 at its meeting on 24 February 2017 and [Korkeakoulujen auditointikäsi kirja 2018-2024](#) (in English [Audit manual for higher education institutions 2018-2024](#)) at its meeting on 16 June 2017.

**Picture 1: The planning phase of the FINEEC audit model 2018-2024**



**The new audit model was piloted during 2018-2019.** The audit model, including audit criteria and instructions for self-assessment, was revised in June-August 2019 based on the feedback and experiences from the pilot phase. Feedback was collected both from the piloted HEIs and the audit teams conducting the pilots with a feedback questionnaire. Also, a workshop discussing the audit model and especially audit criteria was organised with representatives from the piloted HEIs, FINEEC staff and representatives of the [Higher Education Evaluation Committee](#). The Higher Education Evaluation Committee approved [Korkeakoulujen auditointikäsi kirja 2019-2024](#) on 12 September 2019, and its version in English on 13 November 2019 ([Audit manual for higher education institutions 2019-2024](#)) and in Swedish on 12 December 2019 ([Auditeringshandboken för högskolor 2019-2024](#)).

## 3 Compliance with the European standards and guidelines (ESG Part 2.1 and 2.5)

### ESG STANDARD 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

**Standard:**

*External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.*

**FINEEC Compliance:**

FINEEC audits focus on the quality system that HEIs develop for themselves based on their own needs and goals. The audits examine the procedures that the institution uses to maintain and enhance the quality of its activities. The Finnish audit model is based on an institutional and holistic review. Compared to the European principles of quality assurance, the FINEEC audits cover not only education but also research, development and innovation activities and artistic activities as well as societal interaction and impact.

The purpose of the audit model is:

- to evaluate whether the quality work in the HEI meets the European quality assurance standards,
- to assess whether the quality system produces relevant information for the implementation of the strategy and the continuous development of the HEI's activities, and whether it results in effective enhancement activities,
- to encourage internationalisation, experimenting and a creative atmosphere at HEIs, and
- to accumulate open and transparent information on quality work at Finnish HEIs

The FINEEC audits 2019-2024 include four evaluation areas:

- I HEI creates competence
- II HEI promotes impact and renewal
- III HEI enhances quality and well-being
- IV HEI as a learning organisation.

The evaluation areas I–III are each assessed as one entity using the scale *excellent, good, insufficient*. In order for the HEI to pass the audit, the evaluation areas I–III should reach at least the level *good*. For evaluation area IV, the HEI selects an area which is central to its profile or strategy for which it would like to receive feedback for the enhancement of the selected area. The evaluation area IV is not taken into consideration when deciding whether the HEI will pass the audit.

Although the FINEEC model covers all activities of the HEI, there is still a strong focus on planning, implementation and enhancement of education. There is also a strong student-centred focus in the model in line with the ESG 2015.

**Table 1. Consideration of internal quality assurance in FINEEC audits**

<p><b>Part 1: Standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance</b></p>	<p><b>How FINEEC audits address the ESG Part 1</b>  <a href="#">Audit manual for higher education institutions 2019-2024</a>, pages 11-16.</p>
<p><b>1.1 Policy for quality assurance</b>            Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>Quality policy</b>            The principles, objectives and responsibilities of the quality system constitute the HEI's quality policy, which is public. The quality policy forms a common basis for the quality work.</p> <p><b>Quality system's link with strategic management</b>            The information generated by the quality system is used in the management of the HEI. The system supports the profile of the HEI, the achievement of its objectives related to the core duties and the implementation of its strategy.</p> <p><b>Development of the quality system</b>            The HEI has a functioning quality system which covers its core duties. The quality system helps the HEI to recognise development needs and to enhance its activities in a goal-oriented manner. There is evidence of the functionality and impact of the quality system on the enhancement of the core duties. The system is developed in a systematic manner.</p> <p><b>Participatory and open quality culture</b>            The quality culture of the HEI is participatory and open. Staff, students and external stakeholders participate in the enhancement of the HEI's activities in a purposeful manner.</p>
<p><b>1.2 Design and approval of programmes</b>            Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</p>	<p><b>Quality management of degree education</b>            The degree programmes and other provision are planned with clearly defined learning outcomes. The planning process ensures that the educational provision is in line with the HEI's strategy and relevant for working life. Aspects concerning internationalisation and continuous learning needs are ensured in the planning process. In terms of degrees, it is ensured that they correspond with the National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules. The education is planned so that the teaching methods, assessment of learning, and learning environments support the achievement of the learning outcomes.</p> <p>Research, development, innovation and artistic activities are integrated in the education in a way that links research-based information to the education in a relevant way.</p> <p>The students' workload is defined according to the principles of the ECTS (European Credit</p>

	<p>Transfer and Accumulation System). The HEI has systematic procedures for approving the plans for degree programmes or other study entities.</p> <p>The HEI monitors and evaluates the degree programmes and other provision to ensure that they are up to date with regard to the latest research findings as well as the changing needs of the society and working life. In the degree programmes and other provision, how well the intended learning outcomes are achieved is analysed.</p>
<p><b>1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment</b>  Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.</p>	<p>Definition: In the <b>student-centred approach</b>, the HEI encourages students to take an active role in the learning process, for example by supporting the motivation, self-assessment abilities, well-being and flexible study paths of students.</p> <p>The education is planned so that the teaching methods, assessment of learning, and learning environments support the achievement of the learning outcomes.</p> <p>The education is implemented in a manner that supports target-oriented learning and the active role of students in their own learning process. Students receive feedback on their learning which helps them achieve the learning outcomes. The procedures connected with the implementation of education support the efficient progress and completion of studies as well as the integration of students with professional life.</p> <p>The well-being and equality of students are promoted throughout the student’s study path. The HEI provides adequate resources, counselling and other services to support the progress of studies and learning.</p>
<p><b>1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification</b>  Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.</p>	<p>The HEI applies the provisions and regulations concerning student admission, the recognition of prior learning, progress of studies and completion of degrees consistently and transparently.</p>
<p><b>1.5 Teaching staff</b>  Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.</p>	<p>The HEI has functioning procedures to identify development needs concerning staff competence and to support the development of staff competence.</p> <p>The HEI has transparent procedures for staff recruitment.</p> <p>The HEI has systematic procedures to support the well-being, equality and non-discrimination of staff.</p>

<p><b>1.6 Learning resources and student support</b> Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.</p>	<p>The HEI provides adequate resources, counselling and other services to support the progress of studies and learning.</p> <p>The needs of staff and students are considered in the development of support services.</p>
<p><b>1.7 Information management</b> Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.</p>	<p>The HEI systematically collects and uses feedback data on the needs of students, the implementation of the education and the progress of studies in order to enhance the education. Feedback-on-feedback is provided to students in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>The HEI monitors and evaluates the degree programmes and other provision to ensure that they are up to date with regard to the latest research findings as well as the changing needs of the society and working life. Opportunities for continuous learning are ensured in the educational provision. In the degree programmes and other provision, how well the intended learning outcomes are achieved is analysed.</p> <p>Feedback and evaluation data is used systematically in the enhancement of education. The needs of staff and students are considered in the development of support services.</p> <p>Information produced by the HEI's analysis of its operational environment is used to set the direction for its activities.</p>
<p><b>1.8 Public information</b> Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.</p>	<p>HEIs will provide FINEEC the following documents as web links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-an organisational chart</li> <li>-the HEI's strategy</li> <li>-a quality manual or similar description of the HEI's quality system and the management system</li> <li>-web access to the curricula of degree programmes</li> <li>-RPL instructions</li> <li>-the equality plan/non-discrimination statement.</li> </ul> <p>In Finland there is national open statistics database collected by the Statistics Finland, the Ministry of Culture and Education and the Finnish National Agency for Education (<a href="http://www.vipunen.fi">www.vipunen.fi</a>). The HEIs deliver their information once a year to the register, for education in a number of educational sectors, placement of students after completion, research conducted in higher education institutions, the population's educational structure and the socio-economic background of students.</p>
<p><b>1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes</b> Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they</p>	<p>The HEI monitors and evaluates the degree programmes and other provision to ensure that they are up to date with regard to the latest research findings as well as the changing needs of</p>

<p>achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.</p>	<p>the society and working life. Opportunities for continuous learning are ensured in the educational provision. In the degree programmes and other provision, how well the intended learning outcomes are achieved is analysed.</p>
<p><b>1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance</b> Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.</p>	<p>The Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences are required by law to regularly take part in an external evaluation of their activities and quality systems. The HEI can choose the agency conducting the external evaluation.</p> <p>FINEEC conducts institutional audits in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis. The quality label is valid for six years and, thus, the FINEEC procedure requires an audit of the HEI to take place every six years. FINEEC's external quality assurance procedure is a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback or report or its follow-up process within the institution. Therefore, institutions are required to ensure that the progress made by the follow-up seminars after three years from audit visit.</p>

## ESG STANDARD 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES

### Standard:

*Any outcomes or judgments made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.*

### FINEEC Compliance:

All decisions are based on clear criteria published in the audit manual. The evaluation areas I–III are each assessed as one entity using the scale **excellent, good, insufficient**.

In order for the HEI to pass the audit, the evaluation areas I–III should reach at least the level *good*.

The level *good* for the evaluation areas I–III is described in chapter 3 of the [audit manual](#) (also partly referred to in Table 1 above).

The level *excellent* means that the HEI shows evidence of long-term and effective enhancement work. The HEI's enhancement activities also create substantial added value for the HEI, stakeholders, or both. The HEI presents compelling examples of successful enhancement activities.

The level *insufficient* means that the HEI shows an absence of or major shortcomings in systematic, functioning, and participatory procedures in the evaluation area (I–III). There is no clear evidence of the impact of quality management in the enhancement of activities.

The audit team makes an assessment of whether the HEI should pass the audit or whether it should be required to undergo a re-audit. The Higher Education Evaluation Committee, which

functions in connection with FINEEC, makes a decision on the result of the audit based on the presenting official's proposal. The task of the Evaluation Committee is to ensure that the audit decisions are fair. The Evaluation Committee will use the audit team's report in making the decision. In addition, the chair or vice chair of the audit team will present the main results of the audit at the meeting in which the decision will be made and will answer the Evaluation Committee's questions on the report. The Evaluation Committee's decision may deviate from the assessment of the audit team or the proposal of the presenting official.

In its decision-making, the Higher Education Evaluation Committee follows the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act regarding conflicts of interest of its members.

After passing the audit, the HEI will receive an audit certificate and FINEEC's quality label. The HEI will also be entered into the Audit Register, which is maintained on FINEEC's website. The quality label is valid for six years from the decision of the Higher Education Evaluation Committee.

When preparing and making decisions, FINEEC complies with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act concerning disqualification, which, in turn, supports the credibility and objectivity of the decisions.

The FINEEC Project Manager supports the audit team's activities by taking part in the team's discussions as an expert in FINEEC audit model, and by instructing the team on matters concerning the audit criteria and the Higher Education Evaluation Committee's uniform decision policy. Consistent application of the criteria is also supported by mandatory auditor training provided for all audit teams.