FINNISH EDUCATION
EVALUATION CENTRE

RE-AUDIT OF LAHTI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES 2018

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Abstract

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Re-audit of Lahti University of Applied Sciences

Authors
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The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre has conducted a re-audit of Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LAMK) and has awarded the institution a quality label that is valid for six years from 23 August 2018. The quality system of LAMK 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.

In the initial audit conducted in 2016 Lahti University of Applied Sciences did not meet the national audit criteria. The development of the quality system required action from the institution and a re-audit. The re-audit focused on two audit targets:

1. the quality system's link with strategic management (audit target 2), emphasising the involvement of all institutional levels and units, and
2. the quality system as a whole (audit target 6).

The audit team considers that LAMK has made noteworthy progress since the initial audit. The quality system covers the essential parts of the core duties of LAMK and provides support for the development of operations. With the implementation of the Development Plan for Quality, quality work has become more systematic and focused. The developments have created a more unified and institutional quality system with shared guidelines and easily accessible information and data which are used routinely. There is capacity and space for collaboration and communication across faculties and levels to inform developments and identify and share good practice. Among the key improvements the audit team highlights the following:

- The usefulness and use of information that the system produces has greatly improved across the organisation, with the help of the Datawarehouse and intranet system.
- The communication and feedback channels with students are clear and used more by the students, and the feedback loop is closed.

- Common guidelines and clearer definition of roles and responsibilities ensure consistency in operations across faculties and units.

To further develop its quality system, the audit team recommends LAMK to consider:

- Defining clear responsibilities for quality management at the Executive Group level, rather than having parallel groups for quality, to reflect the integration of quality and management systems.
- Continue the work on defining impact indicators for core duties.
- Development of support services would benefit from further clarifying the procedures for goal-setting and formal reporting between the organisational levels.

Keywords
Audit, evaluation, higher education institutions, quality, quality management, quality system, re-audit, university of applied sciences

Tiivistelmä

Julkaisija
Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus

Julkaisun nimi
Re-audit of Lahti University of Applied Sciences 2018
(Lahden ammattikorkeakoulun uusinta-auditointi 2018)

Tekijät
Carolyn Campbell, Riikka Ahmaniemi, Örjan Andersson, Silke Kern, Touko Apajalahti
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Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus on toteuttanut Lahden ammattikorkeakoulun (LAMK) uusinta-auditoinnin ja antanut korkeakoululle laatuleiman. Laatuleima on voimassa kuusi vuotta 23.8.2018 alkaen. LAMKin laatujärjestelmän täyttää korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnalle asetetut kansalliset kriteerit ja vastaa eurooppalaisia korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnan periaatteita ja suosituksia.

Lahden ammattikorkeakoulun varsinainen auditointi toteutettiin 2016. Auditoinnissa LAMKin laatujärjestelmä ei täyttänyt kansallisia auditointikriteereitä. Laatujärjestelmän kehittäminen edellytti korkeakoululta toimenpiteitä ja uusinta-auditointia. Uusinta-auditoinnissa tarkasteltiin kahta auditointikohdetta:

1. Laatujärjestelmän kytkeytyminen strategiseen johtamiseen (auditointikohde 2) painottaen organisaation eri tasojen ja yksiköiden osallistumista
2. Laatujärjestelmän kokonaisuus (auditointikohde 6).

Auditointiryhmän mukaan LAMK on kehittynyt huomattavasti varsinaisen auditoinnin jälkeen. Laatujärjestelmä kattaa keskeisiltä osin korkeakoulun perustehtävät ja tukee toiminnan kehittämistä. Laadunhallinnan kehittämissuunnitelman toteuttamisen myötä laatutyöstä on tullut järjestelmällisempää ja fokusoidumpaa. Kehittämistyöllä on luotu yhtenäisempi koko korkeakoulua koskeva laatujärjestelmä, jossa ohjeet ovat yhteisiä ja tieto helposti saatavilla ja sitä käytetään jatkuvasti. Korkeakoululla on kykyä ja paikkoja yksikköjen ja organisaation eri tasojen väliselle yhteistyölle ja viestinnälle, mikä edesauttaa hyvien käytäntöjen tunnistamisessa ja levittämisessä sekä tuottaa tietoa kehittämisen tueksi. Auditointiryhmä nostaa kehittämistyön erityisinä vahvuuksina esille seuraavat:

- Laatujärjestelmän tuottaman tiedon hyödynnettävyys ja hyödyntäminen ovat parantuneet huomattavasti läpi organisaation tietovarasto- ja intranet-järjestelmien tuella.
- Opiskelijoiden viestintä- ja palautekanavat ovat selkeitä, opiskelijat käyttävät niitä enemmän ja palauteympyrä sulkeutuu.
- Yhteiset ohjeet ja roolien ja vastuiden selkeyttäminen varmistavat toiminnan yhtenäisyyttä yli yksiköiden.

Laatujärjestelmän kehittämiseksi auditointiryhmä suosittelee muun muassa, että LAMK:

- Määrittelisi laadunhallinnan vastuut selkeästi johtoryhmälle rinnakkaisten ryhmien sijaan. Tämä heijastaisi laatu- ja johtamisjärjestelmien yhtenäisyyttä.
- Jatkaisi työtä vaikuttavuuden indikaattorien määrittelemistä perustehtäville.
- Selkeyttäisi tukipalvelujen tavoitteiden asettamiseen ja organisaatiotasojen väliseen raportointiin liittyviä käytäntöjä, mikä hyödyttäisi tukipalvelujen kehittämistä.

Avainsanat
Ammattikoreakoulu, arviointi, auditointi, korkeakoulut, laadunhallinta, laatu, laatujärjestelmä, uusinta-auditointi

Sammandrag

Utgivare
Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering

Publikation
Re-audit of Lahti University of Applied Sciences 2018
(Omauditering av Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu 2018)

Författare
Carolyn Campbell, Riikka Ahmaniemi, Örjan Andersson, Silke Kern, Touko Apajalahti
& Hilla Vuori

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering har genomfört en omauditering av Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu (LAMK) och har beviljat högskolan en kvalitetsstämpel som gäller i sex år från och med den 23 augusti 2018. Lahden ammattikorkeakoulus kvalitetssystem uppfyller de nationella kriterierna för kvalitetshantering som fastställts för högskolor och motsvarar de europeiska principerna för och rekommendationerna om högskolornas kvalitetshantering.

Lahden ammattikorkeakoulus auditering genomfördes 2016. LAMK uppfyllde inte de nationella auditeringskriterierna i den egentliga auditeringen. Utvecklandet av kvalitetssystemet krävde åtgärder av högskolan och en omauditering. Omauditeringen fokuserade på följande auditeringsobjekt:

1. Kvalitetssystemets koppling till strategisk ledning (auditeringsobjekt 2) med fokus på deltagande av organisationens olika nivåer och enheter
2. Kvalitetssystemet som helhet (auditeringsobjekt 6).

Auditeringsgruppen anser att betydande framsteg har gjorts vid LAMK efter den egentliga auditeringen. Kvalitetssystemet omspänner de centrala delarna av högskolans grundläggande uppgifter och utgör ett stöd för utvecklandet av verksamheten. I och med genomförandet av kvalitetsutvecklingsplanen har kvalitetsarbetet blivit mer systematiskt och fokuserat. Genom utvecklingsarbetet har man skapat ett mer enhetligt kvalitetssystem som gäller hela högskolan. Systemet har gemensamma anvisningar, informationen är lätt tillgänglig och den används kontinuerligt. Högskolan har förmågan till och utrymme för samarbete och kommunikation mellan organisationens olika nivåer, vilket bidrar till att identifiera och sprida god praxis samt att producera information som stöd för utvecklingen. Auditeringsgruppen lyfter fram följande som särskilda styrkor:

- Ändamålsenligheten och utnyttjandet av den information som kvalitetssystemet producerar har förbättrats avsevärt i hela organisationen med stöd av databas- och intranätsystem.
- Studerandenas kommunikations- och responskanaler är tydliga, studerandena använder dem mer och responscirkeln sluts.
- Gemensamma anvisningar och tydligare roller och ansvar säkerställer att verksamheten är enhetlig i alla enheter.

För att utveckla kvalitetssystemet rekommenderar auditeringsgruppen bland annat att LAMK:

- Tydligt definierar kvalitetshanteringens ansvar åt ledningsgruppen i stället för parallella kvalitetsgrupper. Detta skulle reflektera kvalitets- och ledningssystemens integrering.
- Fortsätter med arbetet för att definiera indikatorer för de grundläggande uppgifternas genomslagskraft.
- Tydliggör rutinerna för uppställning av mål för stödfunktionerna och rapportering mellan organisationsnivåer, vilket skulle bidra till utvecklingen av stödfunktionerna.

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

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1
Re-audit targets and process

1.1 Re-audit targets

The audit of Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LAMK) was conducted in 2016. The target of the audit was the quality system that LAMK had developed on the basis of its own needs and goals. The focus 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 higher education institution's (HEI) objectives and the content of its activities or results were not evaluated in the audit. The aim of audits is to help the HEI to identify strengths, good practices and areas in need of development in its own operations. Audits evaluate whether the 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 Area (also known as the ESG).

The Higher Education Evaluation Committee of the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre FINEEC decided at its meeting on 13 June 2016 that the quality system of LAMK did not meet the criteria set for quality systems. Based on the Committee's decision, the re-audit focuses on the following audit targets:

- The quality system's link with strategic management (audit target 2) *emphasizing the involvement of all institutional levels and units*
- The quality system as a whole (audit target 6).

The same audit criteria are applied in the re-audit as in the initial audit. Therefore, the *Audit manual for the quality systems of higher education institutions 2015–2018 (*FINEEC 02:2015) was used in the re-audit of LAMK. In a re-audit, the institution is expected to present evidence showing that it has improved its quality system so that the audit targets evaluated in the re-audit have progressed to at least the level of 'developing'. The audit criteria are provided in Appendix 1.

1.2 Re-audit process

The re-audit is based on the material submitted by LAMK, as well as an audit visit to the institution on 24–25 April 2018. The audit team also had access to electronic materials that were important for quality management. The main phases and timeframe of the audit process are listed in Appendix 2.

An international audit team carried out the re-audit in English. LAMK was given the opportunity to comment on the team's composition especially from the perspective of disqualification prior to the appointment of the audit team.

The audit team:

- **Carolyn Campbell**, Senior Consultant at the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, UK (Chair)
- **Riikka Ahmaniemi**, Team Coach, JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland
- **Örjan Andersson**, President and CEO of Novia University of Applied Sciences, Finland
- **Silke Kern**, Master's student, Graz University of Technology, Austria.

FINEEC staff members:

Senior Advisor **Touko Apajalahti** acted as the project manager for the re-audit and Senior Advisor **Hilla Vuori** acted as a backup for the project manager.

As noted, the audit team conducted a two-day audit visit to the institution. The purpose of the visit was to verify and supplement the observations made on the quality system in relation to the re-audit targets based on the audit material. The programme of the visit is shown in Appendix 3.

The audit team drew up this report based on the material gathered during the evaluation and on the analysis of that material. The audit team members produced the report jointly by drawing on the expertise of each team member. LAMK was given the opportunity to check the report for factual information prior to the Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision-making meeting.

2
The organisation of Lahti University of Applied Sciences

Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LAMK) is a multidisciplinary higher education institution located in the city of Lahti in southern Finland. LAMK provides degree education in the fields of business and hospitality management, design, social and healthcare, and technology. As of spring 2018 LAMK still operates on five campuses within Lahti, but is preparing a move to a single campus during summer 2018.

LAMK is a limited company, which was owned by the municipalities of Lahti, Heinola, Hollola and Heinola, and a regional educational federation of municipalities Salpaus until the end of 2017. On 19 December 2017, Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT) became the owner of LAMK, thus joining LAMK to the newly founded LUT Group that consists of LUT, LAMK and Saimaa University of Applied Sciences.

The organisation of LAMK (see Figure 1) is led by the President, who also acts as the Chief Executive Officer of the limited company and reports to the Board. The Board consists of external members representing the owner and regional stakeholders, and internal members representing staff and students. The President is supported by the Vice President and the Executive Group. The Executive Group consists of the President, Vice President, the Director of Administrative Services, the Deans of Faculties, and staff and student representatives. The Executive Group acts also as the Strategic Steering Group for Quality and as the Steering Group for Risk Management.

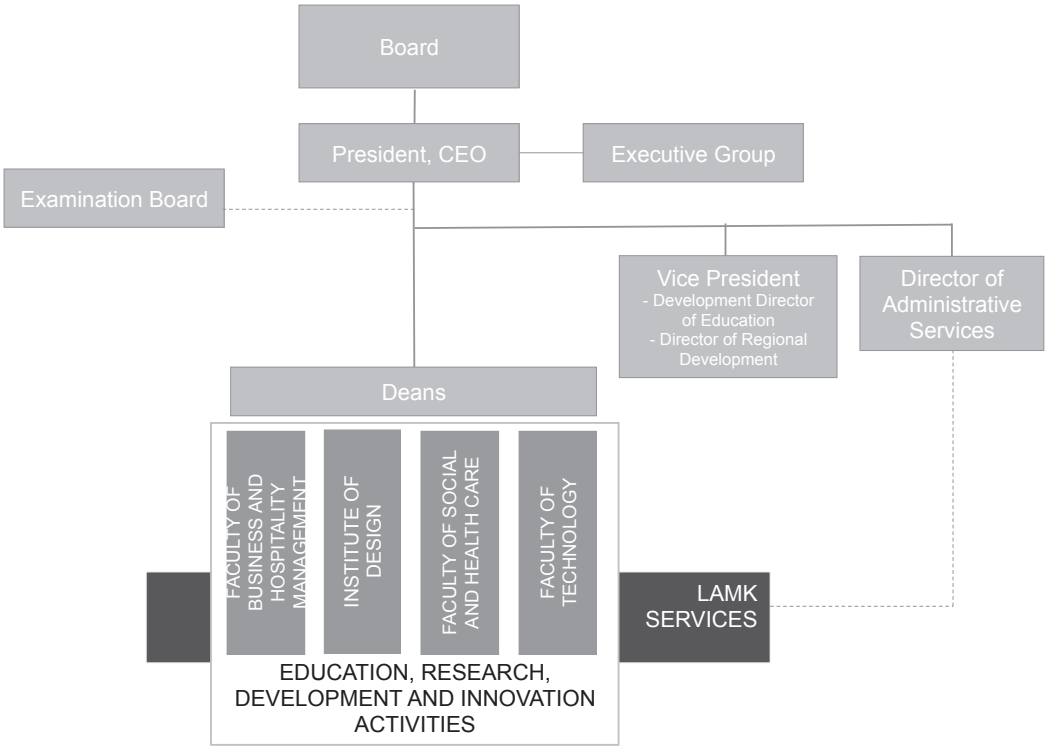

FIGURE 1. Organisation of Lahti University of Applied Sciences

The Faculties are led by Deans who have the overall responsibility for strategy implementation and core operations within their faculty. Each faculty has two Education Managers, who act as line managers for the faculty staff, and one RDI Director, who is responsible for strategic renewal and development of their RDI focus area. Each Degree Programme has a Degree Programme Coordinator, who work under the supervision of the Education Managers and are responsible for the content and curriculum development in their degree programmes. The organisation within faculties is presented in the Figure 2.

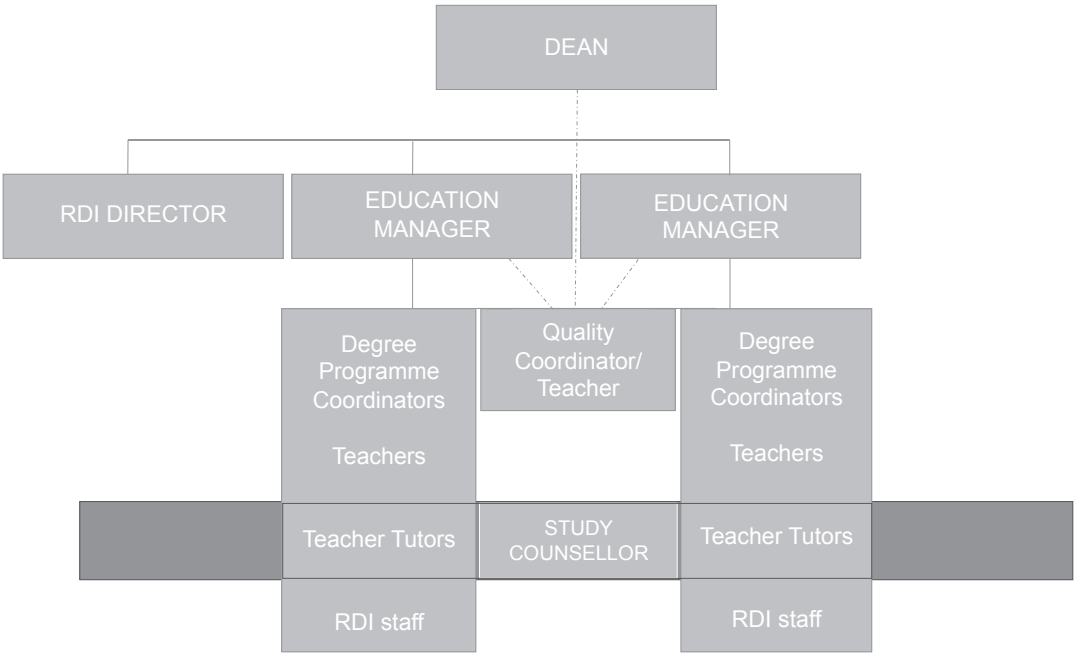

FIGURE 2. Faculty-level organisation at LAMK.

Table 1 presents key facts and figures of Lahti University of Applied Sciences.

TABLE 1. Key facts and figures of Lahti University of Applied Sciences.

Students (full-time equivalent, 2017)	**Number**
Bachelor's students	3855
Master's students	298
Degrees awarded (annual average 2015-2017)	
Bachelor's degree	859
Master's degree	106
Staff (full-time equivalent, 2017)	
Teaching staff	150
RDI staff	40
Other staff	156

The quality system of LAMK is based on the principle of continuous development according to the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (see Figure 3). The system is documented in the LAMK Quality Handbook, which describes strategy implementation, organisation, roles and responsibilities regarding quality, the role of the development groups regarding quality as well as quality procedures of core duties and support services.

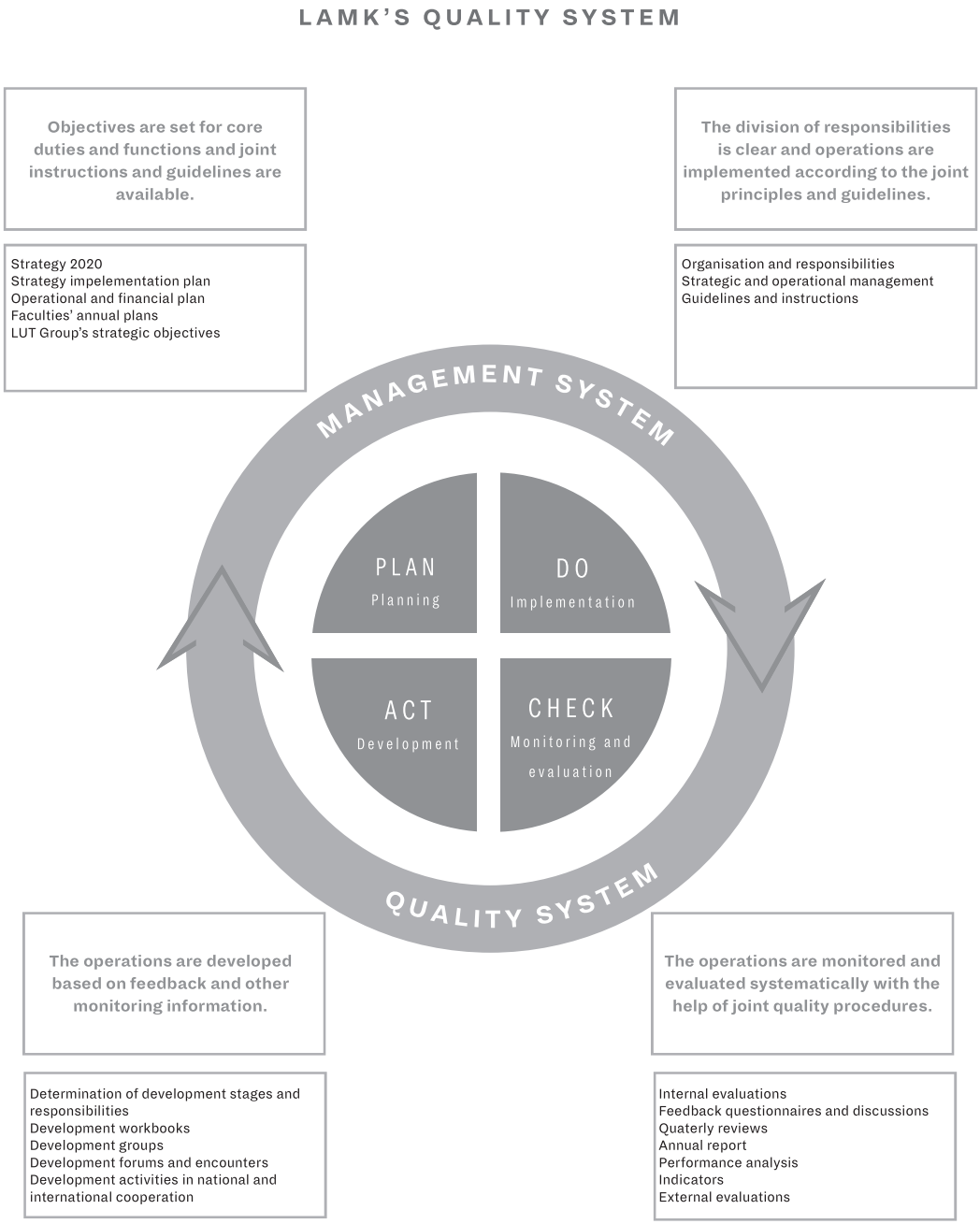

FIGURE 3. Quality system of LAMK as illustrated in the LAMK Quality Handbook.

3
Quality system's link with strategic management

The quality system produces information that serves strategic and operations management. Since the initial audit, LAMK has developed procedures that ensure more systematic use and communication of the information. Specific attention has been paid to develop procedures that enable the system to work evenly across different units and levels of the organisation in its core duties, especially regarding degree education. The division of responsibility has been clarified and simplified and is now effective despite unnecessary complexity at the most senior level. Responsibilities are executed with commitment.

The quality system's link with strategic management is at a ***developing*** *stage.*

3.1 Information produced by the quality system for strategic management

Faculty negotiations have strengthened links between strategic management and the quality system

At the time of the initial audit in 2016 LAMK already had a well-structured system for monitoring and reporting key performance indicators. The interviews confirmed that the Datawarehouse system continues to be a useful tool and has been developed further, containing extensive data available to all staff. It serves as a valued resource for everyday quality work on different levels.

The annual planning and the processes for strategic management have been simplified since the initial audit. As described in the audit material, strategy now has more tangible, measurable objectives and the number of strategic programmes and annual reports has been drastically decreased. It seems that by decreasing the complexity of strategy implementation, monitoring and analysis, the quality of information has improved. This in turn, may improve the performance of the organisation and support the use of information on all organisational levels. The improvements were confirmed during the interviews.

Faculty negotiations have been introduced as part of the annual planning process. This has promoted data oriented management and development, and based on the interviews, also the faculty level sees it as a positive measure. According to LAMK's Self-Evaluation Report 2018, strategy implementation and target achievement is evaluated in real time, if necessary, and at least quarterly. The Datawarehouse includes the most important financial model indicators and other core indicators. The interviews confirmed that the formal channels for communicating goals have improved after introducing faculty negotiations. In addition, the development workbooks that faculties use to record and follow-up development measures are now used in a more systematic way than in 2016.

For support services, a process corresponding to faculty negotiations is missing and the interviews didn't provide evidence how the goal-setting and follow-up of support services is connected to the top management. Based on the interviews, support services are largely self-organised although the Director of Administrative Services, who has overall management responsibility for Support Services, is a member of the Executive Group. Despite the formally weaker link to top management, based on views from several interviews the support services function well and they also found support for their work in the LAMK strategy and from students. In the Development Plan for Quality, LAMK states that the development of quality management and high-quality operations in support services is an integral part of quality work at LAMK and LAMK has recognised the need for updating the quality management procedures of support services when the LUT Group level support service co-operation increases. The audit team sees that LAMK should look into how it can establish ways to link the quality management of support services, that will eventually have LUT Group level co-operation and coordination, to the strategic management of the core duties.

In 2016 there were doubts about the organisation's ability to achieve its qualitative value-based goals, as most of the systematic monitoring was quantitative. In the re-audit material, LAMK stated its ambition to find relevant methods of measuring qualitative objectives. The Strategy Implementation Plan now includes qualitative objectives and the Annual Report follows up on these "in terms of quality assessment", according to the self-evaluation.

The student feedback system has been simplified and developed to support the usability and analysis of the data for strategic and operations management, and to ensure having time for development work based on the data. Course feedback is collected from all courses, and more general level feedback is collected through the questionnaires for first and second year students and the national graduate survey. The first-year questionnaire is supplemented by feedback discussions with first year students. Interviews indicated that the feedback channels function: the response rate to course feedback has been improved and the information combined with the feedback discussions is considered more useful and effective than before and has significantly clarified the feedback processing. Students also confirmed that the feedback channels function well. There also continues to be a culture of dialogue between students and staff.

In the interviews, senior management emphasised that the management system and the quality system are integrated. However, in the organisation structure, the quality and the management systems are parallel at the most senior management level: The Executive Group is given a new name, the Strategic Group for Quality, when dealing with quality matters. As a reason for the division it was explained that the quality system produces information for the management

system. Not seeing quality as a responsibility of the Executive Group, per se, is confusing. The audit team recommends that LAMK considers defining the quality management responsibilities of the Executive Group rather than assigning responsibilities to a parallel group which comprises the Executive Group.

LAMK has improved the use of information by simplifying the organisation and developing the communication channels

According to the initial audit, the procedures for use and communication of quality information worked well at the top level but widely-spread use of informal and parallel information channels resulted in latent information and unsystematic actions and local solutions at programme and teacher level. The audit report also pointed out that complex responsibilities could cause a lack of clarity in mandate and roles leading to information gaps.

The organisation has since been simplified and the usage of data produced by the system has been enhanced by clarifying roles and the division of responsibilities. Also, it was confirmed during the interviews that the flow of information has improved and that the amount of information available is now suitable also at the lower levels of the organisation. The audit team commends these developments and encourages LAMK to continue the work to simplify the organisation, as it still appeared somewhat complex and the quality system at least partly parallel to the management system, as discussed above.

The audit team did not get clear evidence that data produced by the system has been used on the strategic level for the Board in 2016 and 2017. The new Board has been working only since the beginning of 2018 and at the time of the audit visit had only had one meeting. Thus, it's not possible to evaluate the present situation. However, during the interview, the Board members expressed a clear view and commitment to systematic goal-setting, follow-up and use of data produced by the system.

To improve quality related communication and the flow of information LAMK has prepared a Quality Communications Plan for 2016-2018 that addresses issues around communication highlighted by the initial audit. Based on the interviews, the plan itself was not widely known, however, there was evidence of actions described in it having been implemented.

The Quality Handbook defines the platforms for documentation and communication of the quality system and the target groups and contents of the various platforms. The main channel for communicating quality matters is the new intranet Respa and its Workspaces that are accessible to students and staff. The Workspaces contain the Strategy 2020, Datawarehouse, and LAMK Quality workspaces. Based on the interviews, data availability and usability has been improved by the new intranet.

Also, the internal social media tool Yammer is used for communicating quality matters to students and staff. Whereas information in Respa is a collection of instructions, forms and so forth, Yammer is used for more direct and two-way communication. According to interviews, the number of

students using Yammer is steadily increasing, however, not all students are reached through this channel. The audit team recommends the encouragement of wider use of Yammer as it was seen valuable by those interviewees that had actively used it. In addition, a LAMK App for mobile platforms has recently been developed and it aims to make everyday information easily accessible to students and to provide an additional channel to provide ad-hoc feedback to a tool called the Feedback Factory. Based on interviews use of the App was still quite limited for this purpose.

The LAMK website is defined as the communication platform for external stakeholders and cooperation partners and contains key quality information such as the Quality Handbook. Based on the interviews, communication with external stakeholders appeared fragmented. Regarding education, communication at the strategic level was said to work better than at the operational level. In respect of RDI activities communication appeared to function well. Communication with the strategic partners is systematic, although strategic partners would welcome more frequent meetings and considered that there could be value in sometimes organising stakeholder meetings of a multidisciplinary nature. Only a few of the external partners had any knowledge of LAMK's Annual Report.

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

Quality procedures for education are in place at the faculty and degree programme levels

The recommendation of the initial audit to simplify and streamline the quality system at all levels of the university of applied sciences has led to the introduction of Education Managers and Study Counsellors to all faculties. In addition, the role of the Faculty Quality Coordinators has been clarified. There are two Education Managers in each faculty, and they work under the leadership of the Dean. The Education Managers meet regularly as a group, which is intended to ensure coherent strategies for reaching educational goals. By defining these positions, the division of responsibilities (see Figure 2) is much clearer and through joint meetings, communication and harmonisation of processes between and across the faculties can be achieved.

The development group for education, which consists of representatives from all faculties, has established new common guidelines and standardised procedures for processes regarding degree education, including curriculum guidelines and schedules and assessment guidance and framework. Based on the interviews, this has led to processes being more consistent and transparent across the whole organisation and to more equal treatment of students across programmes and faculties.

As mentioned in 3.1, a further point of improvement has been strengthening the faculty development workbooks. At institutional level, the development group for the quality system carries out an internal evaluation of the issues raised in the faculty development workbooks. The Executive Group checks the results of those evaluations, so the development workbooks are also

reviewed at the senior management level. At faculty level, Quality Coordinators are responsible for coordinating and monitoring the workbooks. In conversations with different participants the audit team found evidence of the usage of the workbooks.

Another significant issue identified in the 2016 audit was that the quality system was only partially in use at degree programme level. Since the previous audit, a three-year curriculum process model has been introduced, whereby curriculum development takes place during the first year, in the second it is implemented and in the third year it is evaluated. However, as the three-year cycle was introduced relatively recently, only the first cycle of evaluation has been fulfilled and the full impact of the process is not yet visible.

The three-year curriculum process is closely connected to the improved student feedback system, discussed also in 3.1, that has made the feedback practices to work more evenly across the degree programmes. The student surveys are now also more nuanced and targeted. First year students fill out a questionnaire at Respa to express their experience in the starting phase. The second questionnaire is filled out after the second year and after graduation there is another questionnaire, this time at national level. Students appreciated the new system, as course feedback is now located in the same place as all the other course material (Reppu-system) and the LAMK App and Feedback Factory enable supplementing channels for feedback. Students also considered that the response to their feedback has improved in past two years. However, rather than only being providers of feedback on their experience and courses, students indicated that they would value more feedback on their own performance.

Feedback discussions related to responses in the new first year questionnaires had already taken place and based on the interviews appeared to be fruitful. Students can also give feedback on their courses and the course feedback is discussed by the Education Managers and the teachers and common steps of improvement are agreed and recorded to the workbooks.

Based on the interviews, external stakeholders have opportunities to influence degree education, mostly through informal channels. Procedures for this are more systematic in some programmes and activities than others, thus LAMK should identify what kind of systematic procedures are working well and could be spread to other programmes.

Degree Programme Reviews and other promising practices have been recently created

To further strengthen the quality system at programme level, Degree Programme Reviews have been introduced and the first round was just being implemented during the time of the audit visit. A review consists of a summary of indicator data and feedback results from the previous years, and a self-evaluation that the degree programme conducts based on this summary. Additionally, more thorough reviews are organised for two degree programmes from each faculty. The interviewees had positive experiences of the process and the audit team holds it as a potential good practice, if LAMK can ensure that they lead to action and that they also serve as a mechanism for identifying and sharing good practice across LAMK.

Another promising new practice is the Student Consumer Jury, which is a credit bearing course where students can evaluate LAMK's services and provide feedback on them through developing questionnaires, analyses and identifying good practice examples. The results are presented to different internal stakeholders.

Regarding improvement of teaching skills, LAMK has created the so-called "LOVE" programme. Through the programme, teachers can apply for different badges and get to know their own strengths and weaknesses regarding pedagogical skills, practical skills and the use of new digital tools, and can improve their skills by team teaching. The support structures for teachers, including the role and responsibility of Education Managers, appeared to be working well and the audit team found broad satisfaction with them from the teachers.

Services support studies evenly but international students' internships need further attention

LAMKO is the local student union. The student body is represented in various bodies, including the Board and the Executive Group, where student representatives can give feedback and contribute formally to developments. However, there is scope, for example, in mentoring and supporting student representatives to be effective members of senior level committees.

Student support and international services have been reorganised and centralised, so information can be provided equally to students of all faculties. During the reorganisation, good practices from the faculties were shared to improve the quality of services provided for students. At faculty level, Study Counsellors and Tutor teachers are confidential contact persons for students with individual problems. In addition, student wellbeing groups have been established to provide a platform for students to bring up ideas for special topics. Although overall the student support system is one of LAMK's strengths, the audit team recommends enhancing the support for international students in internships. Especially as internationalisation is one of the strategic aims of the LUT Group, LAMK should ensure sufficient support for international students recruited to disciplines where internships are essential to degree completion.

Support services are involved in quality management of aspects of the implementation of degree education. However, when developing support services for the LUT Group, the audit team recommends considering how support services could take part in degree programme development to take advantage of their expertise.

New roles have clarified RDI processes and led to more consistency in project applications

Strategic objectives for RDI are described in the strategy 2020 and for strategy implementation, the goals for activities are defined in annual operational and financial plans and in faculties' annual plans. The main objective for RDI is determined in terms of the volume of external funding and secondly the number of publications produced. The achievement of quantitative goals is

monitored at the institutional level by the Board and the Executive Group, and at the faculty level by Deans, Education Managers and RDI Directors. The Datawarehouse provides real-time data on the volumes and publications both at the institutional and faculty levels.

Since the previous audit, the responsibilities for RDI functions, especially concerning decision-making, have been streamlined and clarified, so that RDI activities are devolved to the focus areas. RDI Directors are responsible for the focus areas. RDI Directors monitor the execution of RDI projects as part of their operational management responsibilities. The information is gathered from the Project Management Programme Reportronic, annual RDI self-assessments, feedback from the project partners and projects' financial data. Most of the data is available for everyone using the Reportronic, but in addition, the Director of Support Services produces forecasts of project applications and on how the projects are progressing. The data is discussed in the Development group for RDI, which coordinates and manages the operational level of RDI. As a development since the previous audit, the RDI development group focuses specifically on quality issues twice a semester, with support from the LAMK quality staff.

The external stakeholders, who have been working with LAMK for many years, considered that LAMK has developed the quality of project applications and execution of RDI projects in past years. The applications are well coordinated within LAMK and integrate experts from different fields. According to the interviews, the quality of applications has also improved. The interviewed staff members also felt that the project application process is clear and, based on the interviews, the processes for developing and conducting RDI projects were working evenly across the focus areas. It is helpful that everyone uses the same Reportronic system for managing the projects from the idea phase to the end of the project.

Support services for RDI have also clarified their division of labour according to the focus areas. The interviewed staff felt that this has improved the services they need, especially when it comes to finding the right funding instruments.

As a point for improvement, the audit team considers that the qualitative objectives for focus areas are quite abstract, which makes it hard for staff or managers to know whether they are achieving them or not. In the future, this might need clarification.

Strategic partnerships systematise regional co-operation but would benefit from more agile interaction

Extensive contacts with working-life and the region are a clear strength of LAMK. LAMK participates actively in the implementation of the strategy of Lahti region and there appears to be a genuine interest for co-operation from external stakeholders. One major example is in events production, where the co-operation involves a great number of students and companies annually to organise regionally, nationally and even internationally notable events. It was evident from the interview with external stakeholders that LAMK is seen as a central resource for regional development.

The audit report 2016 recommended that the cooperation between the regional development teams and the quality team should be strengthened to ensure that the institutional quality policy is well applied across different teams. LAMK's response has been to include quality issues to the meeting agenda of each development team at regular intervals. Thus, the development teams seem empowered with respect to quality matters, which is a sign of a maturing quality system and culture.

Since 2016 LAMK has a reduced and more focused number of indicators for regional development. Follow-up also includes surveys. In 2016 the procedures for regional cooperation were quite new, but now they have been integrated into daily operations. The regional development impact is assessed and documented in an annual institution level report. It is also assessed in the follow-up of the annual plan for regional development.

In order to handle external contacts in a more systematic way, LAMK is planning to purchase a new Customer Relations Management (CRM) system. This would be a positive step in systemising the communication with external stakeholders, which based on the interviews, does not currently appear systematic in functions other than RDI. However, the CRM system was still in the process of development at the time of the audit.

According to LAMK, establishing strategic partnerships has been one of the most successful regional development operations in the last two years. LAMK now has more than 30 such partners with whom cooperation is developed systematically. Based on the interviews, the strategic partnerships are important for regional development and appear to have improved the two-way communication with companies. There is a formal meeting once a year, where annual goals for the partnership are set, ensuring systematic contact. However, to the stakeholders this does not seem to be sufficient, as they would value more frequent contact. External stakeholders have experienced that LAMK has had a lack of resources for collaboration during the last two years due to big internal changes at LAMK over the period, however, the stakeholders are optimistic about a stronger focus on regional co-operation and development following the changes. Based on the interviews, the audit team sees that to fully capitalise on opportunities and the interest of stakeholders, more agile ways of interacting with stakeholders and more systematic follow-up of the stakeholder interaction is needed.

Time is needed to institutionalise the improved quality procedures and to assess their impacts

Overall, the audit team noted a significant improvement in the operation of the quality system across and between levels and units at LAMK since the initial audit. There have been several changes in the definition of roles and responsibilities since the previous audit, especially in respect of less senior managerial levels, but there is still unevenness across levels in some activities, notably in relation to societal and regional impact. This could be a consequence of LAMK's focus on other core activities where the Executive Group and the Board had recently identified key issues: student progress (achievement of 55 ECTS a year), completion (graduation rates) and RDI revenue. These goals were clearly known throughout LAMK.

The roles and responsibilities of actors in the quality system are described in various places on the intranet and the Quality Handbook and appear to be effective and well understood in practice. In particular, the audit team noted the clarification of roles of Education Managers, Deans and RDI directors since the previous audit. Several aspects of the quality system are still relatively new and some are in development. Given the period of exceptional changes at LAMK, the audit team considers that the quality system needs time to function for a full cycle without further major changes other than those for the conclusion of the Development Plan for Quality 2018, which includes the revision of support services quality procedures. However, an issue to resolve is clarification of the integration of quality and management systems and roles at the Executive Group level (see 3.1 above).

4
The quality system as a whole

The quality management procedures constitute a functioning system. The system provides support for the development of the core duties. There is evidence that the system has an impact on the development of the core duties. The development work since the initial audit has enhanced involvement at all institutional levels and units, supporting a quality culture where people are more committed and empowered to quality work.

The quality system as a whole is at a ***developing*** *stage.*

4.1 Comprehensiveness and impact of the quality system

The renewed quality system and information produced by it is providing better support for strategic and operations management and the development of quality work at LAMK. Through systematic implementation and monitoring of the changes described in the Development Plan for Quality 2016-2018, LAMK has addressed gaps and weaknesses in the functioning of the quality system identified in the previous audit report, such as low levels of engagement of teaching staff and students in the quality system, a low response rate in the course feedback system and reliance on local rather than institutional quality procedures at course and degree programme level. Clarification of roles and responsibilities has made a significant contribution to the effectiveness of quality management.

The usefulness and use of information that the quality system produces has greatly improved across the organisation with the help of the Datawarehouse and new intranet systems. Overall there is more consistent use of data produced from the quality system evidenced throughout the audit process from documentation to interviews across and between the organisational levels of LAMK and with external stakeholders.

In respect of degree education, LAMK has addressed the issue of supporting active engagement of teaching staff in quality development in the Degree Programmes through a number of new initiatives and practices. Common guidelines have been developed to be used across LAMK to ensure consistent and equal treatment of students across programmes and faculties. The audit team also noted the range of support provided to teaching staff to enhance their teaching skills. The audit team found evidence of improved effectiveness in the renewed student feedback systems. Students were satisfied that issues they raised through electronic and face to face means were addressed and that the feedback loop was closed.

The quality management procedures related to research, development and innovation activities remain functional and provide support for operations. LAMK has addressed the issue of the complexity of roles and responsibilities for RDI, especially in relation to decision-making, through streamlining processes and the creation of the RDI development Group. Where the audit team sees room for further development is in clarifying goal setting and impact criteria for the focus areas.

The audit team noted the extensive range of LAMK's contacts with working life in the region and in particular the development of strategic partnerships with companies over the previous two years and the positive support for LAMK. Since the previous audit quality issues have been included in the agendas of regional development team meetings, offering the opportunity to strengthen the application of LAMK's institutional quality policy across different teams to foster consistency in approach. The system of strategic partners was welcomed, although there was a desire for more frequent and systematic engagement with LAMK. A range of other improvement measures in relation to regional development were also identified in the Development Plan for Quality, including the development of impact measures. The audit team considered that LAMK had recognised and articulated what needed to be done in relation to enhancing the quality procedures for regional development. Some of this work was in progress or scheduled for later in the year according to the Development Plan for Quality, which the audit team encourages LAMK to implement in accordance with the planned time schedule.

4.2 Quality culture

Based on the audit material and interviews, it is evident that over the past two years LAMK has worked to create a shared quality culture and to integrate quality work into everybody's activities. The recommendations of the previous audit have been carefully evaluated and many of them have been acted on. There have been relevant improvements for example in communication channels, role clarifications and shared guidelines. The audit team noted that these changes have created a positive atmosphere on quality issues, with people seeing that the procedures bring value to their work. People from different positions and levels expressed commitment to procedures and there was no evidence of people experiencing the workload on quality work as too high or as extra work. The phrase of the quality handbook "At LAMK Everybody is a quality maker" seems to be real.

As an example of the participatory culture, the self-evaluation process for the re-audit was started in the development groups, which gathered the information and evaluations of the current situation for the Strategic Steering Group for Quality and for the Board. The LUT partners commented on the report and it was published in Yammer for the staff and students to comment. All the interviewed staff members had either commented on the report or at least seen it. For students and other stakeholders except LUT partners, it was less familiar.

Interviewees felt that the new intranet Respa has improved the documentation. It is the channel of formal information and it includes all the quality procedures, memos of the management and development groups and improvement actions created through the quality procedures. The changes in communication channels have created transparency of quality procedures. Growing usage of Yammer as a communication channel of staff and students enables rapid information and discussion concerning general changes. Students felt that the communication channels are now relevant.

The Development Plan for Quality, together with the supporting Quality Communications Plan have transformed recommendations from the last audit into concrete development actions. The audit team commends that the actions in wide range have enhanced the quality awareness and culture within LAMK.

4.3 The quality system as a whole

The quality system covers the essential parts of the core duties of LAMK and provides support for the development of operations. With the implementation of the Development Plan for Quality, quality work has become more systematic and focused. There is evidence that changes, although some are relatively recent, have created a more unified quality system, an institutional system with shared guidelines, easily accessible information and data which are used routinely, and the capacity and space for collaboration and communication across faculties and levels to inform developments and identify and share good practice.

While not all changes are fully embedded, there is evidence that the system has an impact on the development of core duties, with significant improvements in the engagement of teaching staff in degree education quality processes, positive feedback from external stakeholders and increased success in RDI activity.

That LAMK has achieved this during a period of turbulence with a change in ownership and governance and three changes in leadership, as well as planning for a move to a new campus, is testimony to the quality culture within the institution and to the tenacity and competence of those who have managed the implementation of the Development Plan for Quality, which in large part has addressed the shortcomings identified and recommendations made in the previous audit.

5
Conclusions

5.1 Strengths and areas for further development in relation to the re-audit targets

The audit team commends LAMK for the development work that has taken place since the initial audit. The following are considered as the main strengths and good practices of LAMK's quality system:

- The usefulness and use of information that the system produces has greatly improved across the organisation, with the help of the Datawarehouse and intranet system.
- Communication and feedback channels with students are clear and used more by the students, and the feedback loop is closed.
- Common guidelines and clearer definition of roles and responsibilities ensure consistency in operations across faculties and units.
- The degree programme reviews are a promising tool for identifying and sharing good practice across programmes.
- Establishing strategic partnerships with companies has made co-operation more systematic and improved two-way communication with external stakeholders.
- Development of the RDI project application process has led to improved quality of applications recognised by external partners.

In the further development of its quality system, the audit team recommends LAMK to consider the following:

- Defining clear responsibilities for quality management at the Executive Group level, rather than having parallel groups for quality, to reflect the integration of quality and management systems.
- Continue the work on defining impact indicators for core duties.

- Development of support services would benefit from further clarifying the procedures for goal-setting and formal reporting between the organisational levels.
- More agile ways of interacting with stakeholders, with more systematic follow-up of the stakeholder interaction to fully capitalise on opportunities and the interests of stakeholders.
- Given the inclusion of internationalisation in the strategic aims of the LUT Group, LAMK should pay attention to ensuring equal opportunities for international students regarding internships.

5.2 The audit team's overall assessment

The quality system of Lahti University of Applied Sciences meets the FINEEC criteria for the quality system as a whole and for the quality management as it relates to basic duties.

The audit team proposes to FINEEC Higher Education Evaluation Committee that Lahti University of Applied Sciences passes the audit.

5.3 Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision

In its meeting on 23 August 2018, the Higher Education Evaluation Committee decided, based on the proposal and report of the audit team, that the quality system of Lahti University of Applied Sciences meets the FINEEC criteria for quality systems as a whole and quality management of the higher education institution's basic duties.

of Lahti University of Applied Sciences has been awarded a quality label that is valid for six years beginning on 23 August 2018.

APPENDIX 1: Table of the audit targets and criteria

TARGETS	CRITERIA			
	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
1. Quality policy	The quality policy shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the: • 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.	• 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.	• 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.	• 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			
	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
2. Quality system's link with strategic management	The quality system and quality work show an absence of or major shortcomings in the: • 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.	• 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.	• 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 and operations management 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	The HEI shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the: • procedures for evaluating or developing the quality system or • overall view of the functioning of the quality system.	• 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.	• 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.	• 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.
Follow-up section for the HEIs subject to the second audit:	The HEI shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the: • development work following the first audit.	• The development of the quality system after the first audit has not been systematic or effective.	• The development of the quality system after the first audit has been systematic. The system works better than before.	• 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**	The quality system shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the: • 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.	• 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.	• 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.	• 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** • 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** • Teaching methods and learning environments • Methods used to assess learning • Students' learning and well-being • Teachers' competence and occupational well-being. **Participation** • Participation of different personnel groups, students and external stakeholders in quality work related to the degree programme. **Effectiveness of quality work** • Suitability of key evaluation methods and follow-up indicators and their impact on the achievement of goals.	The quality system shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the: • 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.	• 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.	• 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 educational provision are 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.	• 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 and with commitment 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	• The HEI has only individual and unrelated quality management procedures. • There is no evidence of the procedures' impact on the development of the operations.	• 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.	• 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.	• 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 re-audit process

Negotiation between the HEI and FINEEC	17 January 2017
Appointment of the audit team	20 June 2017
Submission of the audit material	27 February 2018
Audit visit	24-25 April 2018
Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision on the result	23 August 2018
Publication of the report	23 August 2018
Follow-up on the development work of the quality system	2021

APPENDIX 3. Programme of the re-audit visit

Tuesday 24 April	
9.00–10.00	Interview with the Executive Group
10.15–11.15	Interview on Development of quality management
11.30–12.30	Interview with the Education Managers
13.30–14.20	Interview on Degree programme development
14.30–15.20	Interview with Finnish students Interview with international students
15.30–16.20	Interview with teachers
16.30–17.20	Interview with the Board
Wednesday 25 April	
9.00–09.45	Interview with external stakeholders
10.00–11.00	Interview on Research, development and innovation activities
11.00–12.00	Interview on Regional development
13.00–14.00	Interview with support services
16.00–16.30	Final interview with and preliminary feedback to the Executive Group

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 process and the results of the re-audit of Lahti University of Applied Sciences.

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