

# Audit of Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT



Birgitta Bergvall-Kåreborn, Brian Bowe, Hanna Maula, Esmail Tavakolnia, Mirella Harri & Eerikki Vainio



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## Title of publication

Audit of Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT

## Authors

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## Decision of the Higher Education Evaluation Committee on the audit

The audit of Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT was approved on 25 August 2026. The university was awarded the Quality Label of the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC), which is valid until 16 June 2033.

A successful audit demonstrates that LUT University's operations and quality system meet the national criteria as well as the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education.

## Follow-up

The audit follow-up of Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT will be carried out in 2028.

## The audit team's assessment of evaluation areas I-II

I: Strategic management supported by the quality system: *Good*

II: Learning supported by teaching and guidance: *Good*

The strategic cross-cutting theme chosen by LUT: *Internationalisation*

## General observations by the audit team

LUT University demonstrates a clear and ambitious strategic direction grounded in regional and national needs, as well as its own strengths and growth areas. This vision is reinforced by a strong culture of ambition and a consistent drive to excel across the organisation, with tangible results such as increased external research funding and a growing international student population. Internationalisation is a core strategic

priority, deeply embedded in all activities. The organisational culture is agile and engaging with low hierarchies and approachable leadership.

The university adopts an integrated and developmental approach to quality management. Rather than relying on highly formalised quality assurance processes, responsibility for quality is distributed across institutional roles and embedded within normal university activities. The institutional quality culture is strongly informed by the “Plan–Do–Check–Act” (PDCA) cycle and a commitment to continuous enhancement.

The audit identified many examples of effective practice across LUT’s research activities, stakeholder and industry engagement, collaboration in programme design, curriculum review, pedagogical development, and support for internationalisation. Staff and students consistently highlighted strong teacher engagement, supportive learning environments, and the integration of research and industry perspectives within programmes.

The audit also identified a strong institutional willingness to improve. Staff and senior leadership demonstrated openness regarding current challenges, particularly in relation to rapid growth in student numbers, increasing internationalisation, pedagogical development, workload management, and the impact of digitalisation and artificial intelligence on teaching and assessment.

However, the audit also identified several recurring themes relating to consistency, monitoring, and institutional oversight especially in education. While responsibilities for quality management of education are clearly articulated within the Quality Manual, there is some variation in implementation of processes and the quality of their application across programmes and schools.

LUT has made internationalisation a genuine institutional priority and has taken many concrete actions to support it. The main development need is not the absence of activity. Rather, it is the need to make the systems behind these activities more visible, more consistent, and more clearly evidence-based. At the same time, sustainable internationalisation also depends on strengthening an inclusive everyday culture in which Finnish and international students and staff can participate, interact and feel part of the same university community.

Overall, the audit team found that LUT University demonstrates a strong strategic commitment to research, educational quality, student-centred learning, internationalisation, and continuous enhancement. The university benefits from a highly engaged academic community, strong collaboration with industry, and well-developed pedagogical support structures. To further strengthen the consistency and sustainability of educational quality, the university would benefit from more systematic institutional oversight, clearer monitoring processes, stronger quality assurance mechanisms, and more robust evaluation of the effectiveness of enhancement initiatives.

## Key strengths and recommendations

### Strengths

- The university has a well-considered and ambitious vision and strategy, grounded in regional and national needs as well as its own strengths and growth potential.
- There is a strong institutional commitment to continuous improvement and enhancement, supported by an embedded quality culture and a shared understanding of the PDCA approach.
- The university’s student communities are a strong and important resources for the whole university.
- The university maintains active and productive collaboration with external stakeholders, industry, and alumni, strengthening programme relevance and societal impact, as reflected in successful external research funding.

- The university has clear and ambitious visions and goals for its research focused on key societal challenges. It effectively monitors societal impact with regional stakeholders and tracks research quality and impact through national and international evaluations, and actively addresses identified quality issues and operational challenges.
- There is strong alignment between programme development and the university's strategic priorities, including sustainability, internationalisation, research integration, and labour market relevance. Programme development and review involve extensive consultation with employers, industry representatives, national stakeholders, academic staff, and students.

## Recommendations

- The university should establish indicators and assessment criteria that clearly reflect its vision, mission, values, and strategic priorities, enabling systematic monitoring of progress at the highest system level.
- The university should ensure clear and timely communication on major administrative and structural changes, including early and meaningful consultation with student representatives.
- The university should further formalise and consistently apply quality assurance and enhancement processes across all programmes and schools to reduce variability in implementation. The university should strengthen follow-up processes for courses and programmes with insufficient quality by establishing clear procedures that ensure corrective actions are implemented, monitored, and lead to the intended improvements.
- The university should continue targeted support for international students' integration into the Finnish labour market and society, with a particular focus on Finnish language skills and stronger links to local industry.
- The university should ensure that the increasing scale and diversity of the student population are matched by adequate resourcing, staff development, and scalable quality enhancement processes.

## Tiivistelmä

## Julkaisun nimi

Lappeenrannan-Lahden teknillisen yliopiston LUT auditointi (Audit of Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT)

## Tekijät

Birgitta Bergvall-Kåreborn, Brian Bowe, Hanna Maula, Esmail Tavakolnia, Mirella Harri & Eerikki Vainio

## Korkeakoulujen arviointijaoston päätös auditoinnista

Lappeenrannan-Lahden teknillisen yliopiston auditointi on hyväksytty 25.8.2026. Yliopistolle myönnettiin Kansallisen koulutuksen arviointikeskuksen (Karvi) laatuleima, joka on voimassa 16.6.2033 asti.

Hyväksytty auditointi on osoitus siitä, että LUT-yliopiston toiminta ja laatujärjestelmä täyttävät kansalliset sekä eurooppalaiset korkeakoulujen laadunvarmistusta koskevat kriteerit.

## Auditointiryhmän arvio arviointialueista I-II

Arviointialue I: Strateginen johtaminen laatujärjestelmän avulla: *hyvä*

Arviointialue II: Oppimista edistävä opetus ja ohjaus: *hyvä*

LUT:n valitsema strateginen läpileikkaava teema: *kansainvälisyys*

## Auditointiryhmän yleiset havainnot

LUT-yliopistolla on selkeä ja kunnianhimoinen strateginen suunta, joka perustuu alueellisiin ja kansallisiin tarpeisiin sekä yliopiston omiin vahvuuksiin ja kasvumahdollisuuksiin. Strategian toteutumista tukevat korkeat tavoitteet sekä yliopiston läpäisevä sitoutuminen toiminnan laatuun. Tämä näkyy konkreettisina tuloksina, kuten ulkopuolisen tutkimusrahoituksen kasvuna ja kansainvälisten opiskelijoiden määrän lisääntymisenä. Kansainvälistyminen on keskeinen strateginen painopiste, joka näkyy yliopiston kaikessa toiminnassa. LUT:n toimintakulttuurille on ominaista osallistavuus sekä matalan hierarkian johtaminen.

Yliopistolla on integroitu ja kehittämistä korostava lähestymistapa laadunhallintaan. Vastuu laadusta on jaettu yliopiston eri toimijoille ja sisällytetty osaksi päivittäistä toimintaa. Laatukulttuuria ohjaavat vahvasti PDCA-

sykli (Plan–Do–Check–Act) sekä sitoutuminen toiminnan jatkuvaan kehittämiseen.

Auditoinnissa tunnistettiin useita hyviä käytäntöjä LUT-yliopiston tutkimustoiminnassa, sidosryhmä- ja yritys yhteistyössä, koulutusohjelmien suunnittelussa, opetussuunnitelmien arvioinnissa, pedagogisessa kehittämisessä sekä kansainvälisyyden tukemisessa. Henkilöstö ja opiskelijat korostivat opettajien vahvaa sitoutumista, oppimista tukevia oppimisympäristöjä sekä tutkimus- ja työelämänäkökulmien integroitumista koulutusohjelmiin.

LUT:ssa on vahva jatkuvan kehittämisen kulttuuri. Henkilöstö ja ylin johto tarkastelivat avoimesti nykyisiä haasteita, jotka liittyvät erityisesti opiskelijamäärien nopeaan kasvuun, kansainvälisyyden vahvistamiseen, pedagogiseen kehittämiseen, työkuormituksen hallintaan sekä digitalisaation ja tekoälyn vaikutuksiin opetukseen ja osaamisen arviointiin.

Auditoinnissa tunnistettiin haasteita koulutuksen laadunhallinnan yhdenmukaisuudessa, seurannassa ja yliopistotason ohjauksessa. Vaikka koulutuksen laadunhallinnan vastuut on kuvattu selkeästi laatukäsikirjassa, koulutusohjelmien ja tiedekuntien välillä on vaihtelua prosessien toteutuksessa.

LUT on tehnyt kansainvälisyydestä koko yliopistoa ohjaavan strategisen painopisteen ja toteuttanut konkreettisia toimenpiteitä sen edistämiseksi. Kehittämistarpeet eivät liity toiminnan määrään, vaan siihen, että toimintaa tukevat järjestelmät ja käytännöt olisivat nykyistä näkyvämpiä, yhtenäisempiä ja selkeämmin näyttöön perustuvia. Lisäksi kansainvälistyminen edellyttää yliopiston toimintakulttuurin vahvistamista niin, että suomalaisilla ja kansainvälisillä opiskelijoilla sekä henkilöstön jäsenillä on yhdenvertaiset mahdollisuudet osallistua yliopistoyhteisön toimintaan, tehdä yhteistyötä ja kokea kuuluvansa samaan yhteisöön.

Yhteen vetona auditointiryhmä toteaa, että LUT-yliopisto osoittaa vahvaa strategista sitoutumista tutkimukseen, koulutuksen laatuun, opiskelijakeskeiseen koulutukseen, kansainvälisyyteen ja jatkuvaan kehittämiseen. Yliopiston vahvuuksia ovat sitoutunut akateeminen yhteisö, tiivis yhteistyö elinkeinoelämän kanssa sekä hyvin kehittyneet pedagogisen tuen rakenteet. Koulutuksen laadun vahvistamiseksi yliopisto hyötyisi nykyistä systemaattisemmasta yliopistotasoisesta ohjauksesta, yhtenäisemmistä käytännöistä ja kehittämistoimien vaikutusten paremmasta seurannasta.

## Keskeiset vahvuudet ja suositukset

### Vahvuudet

- Yliopistolla on kunnianhimoinen visio ja strategia, jotka perustuvat alueellisiin ja kansallisiin tarpeisiin sekä yliopiston omiin vahvuuksiin ja kasvumahdollisuuksiin.
- Yliopistossa on vahva sitoutuminen jatkuvaan kehittämiseen. Tätä tukevat vakiintunut laatukulttuuri sekä yhteinen ymmärrys PDCA-mallin mukaisesta toimintatavasta.
- Opiskelijayhteisöt ovat merkittävä ja arvokas voimavara koko yliopistolle.
- Yliopistolla on aktiivinen ja tuloksellinen yhteistyö ulkoisten sidosryhmien, elinkeinoelämän ja alumnien kanssa. Yhteistyö vahvistaa koulutusten työelämärelevanssia ja yliopiston yhteiskunnallista vaikuttavuutta, mikä näkyy myös menestyksenä ulkopuolisen tutkimusrahoituksen hankinnassa.
- Yliopistolla on selkeä ja kunnianhimoinen tutkimusvisio sekä keskeisiin yhteiskunnallisiin haasteisiin kohdistuvat tavoitteet. Tutkimusta ja yhteiskunnallista vaikuttavuutta seurataan yhteistyössä alueellisten toimijoiden kanssa sekä kansallisten ja kansainvälisten tutkimuksen laatu- ja vaikuttavuusarviointien avulla. Yliopisto puuttuu aktiivisesti tunnistettuihin laatuhaasteisiin ja kehittämiskohteisiin.
- Koulutusohjelmien kehittäminen on linjassa yliopiston strategisten painopisteiden kanssa, kuten kestävyys, kansainvälisyys, tutkimusperustaisen opetuksen sekä työelämärelevanssin edistämisen.
- Koulutusohjelmien kehittäminen ja arviointi perustuvat tiiviiseen vuoropuheluun työnantajien, elinkeinoelämän edustajien, kansallisten sidosryhmien, henkilöstön ja opiskelijoiden kanssa.

## Suosituksset

- Yliopiston tulee kehittää mittareita ja arviointikriteerejä, jotka heijastavat sen visiota, tehtävää, arvoja ja strategisia painopisteitä sekä tukevat niiden toteutumisen systemaattista seurantaa yliopistotasolla.
- Yliopiston tulee varmistaa, että merkittävistä hallinnollisista ja organisaatiomuutoksista viestitään selkeästi, avoimesti ja oikea-aikaisesti. Lisäksi yliopiston tulee huolehtia opiskelijaedustajien tarpeeksi varhaisista osallistumismahdollisuuksista muutosten valmisteluun.
- Yliopiston tulee vahvistaa edelleen laadunhallinnan systemaattisuutta ja yhdenmukaisuutta eri koulutusohjelmissa ja tiedekunnissa. Lisäksi yliopiston tulee selkeyttää opintojaksojen ja koulutusohjelmien seurantaa siten, että korjaavien toimenpiteiden toteutumista ja vaikutuksia seurataan systemaattisesti.
- Yliopiston tulee jatkaa kohdennettuja tukitoimia kansainvälisten opiskelijoiden integroitumiseksi suomalaiseen työelämään ja yhteiskuntaan. Erityistä huomiota tulee kiinnittää suomen kielen osaamisen vahvistamiseen sekä yhteyksien kehittämiseen paikalliseen elinkeinoelämään.
- Yliopiston tulee varmistaa, että kasvavan ja yhä monimuotoisemman opiskelijajoukon tarpeisiin vastataan riittävillä resursseilla, henkilöstön osaamisen kehittämällä sekä toiminnan kasvuun mukautuvilla laadunhallinnan prosesseilla.

# Sammandrag

## Publikation

Auditering av Villmanstrand–Lahtis tekniska universitet LUT ( Audit of Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT)

## Författare

Birgitta Bergvall-Kåreborn, Brian Bowe, Hanna Maula, Esmail Tavakolnia, Mirella Harri & Eerikki Vainio

## Beslutet av sektionen för utvärdering av högskolorna

Auditeringen av Villmanstrand–Lahtis tekniska universitet LUT godkändes den 25.8.2026. Universitetet beviljades NCUs kvalitetsstämpel som gäller till och med 16.6.2033.

En godkänd auditering visar att LUT-universitetets verksamhet och kvalitetssystem uppfyller de nationella kriterierna samt de europeiska kriterierna för kvalitetssäkring inom högre utbildning.

## Auditeringsgruppens bedömning av utvärderingsområdena I–II

Utvärderingsområde I: Strategiskt ledarskap genom kvalitetssystemet: *god nivå*

Utvärderingsområde II: Undervisning och handledning som främjar lärande: *god nivå*

Övergripande strategiskt tema som LUT valde: *internationalisering*

## Auditeringsgruppens allmänna slutsatser

LUT-universitetet har en tydlig och ambitiös strategisk inriktning som bygger på regionala och nationella behov samt på universitetets egna styrkor och tillväxtpotential. Visionen stöds av ambitiösa mål och en universitetsgenomgripande strävan efter hög kvalitet. Detta avspeglas i konkreta resultat, såsom ökad extern forskningsfinansiering och ett växande antal internationella studerande. Internationalisering är en central strategisk tyngdpunkt som genomsyrar all verksamhet. Verksamhetskulturen är flexibel och engagerande, med låga hierarkier och ett lättillgängligt ledarskap.

Universitetet har ett integrerat och utvecklingsinriktat arbetssätt för kvalitetshantering. I stället för att förlita sig på starkt formaliserade kvalitetsprocesser är ansvaret för kvalitet fördelat mellan olika funktioner och

integrerat i den ordinarie verksamheten. Kvalitetskulturen präglas i hög grad av PDCA-cykeln (Plan-Do-Check-Act) och av ett kontinuerligt fokus på utveckling och förbättring.

Auditeringen identifierade många exempel på välfungerande praxis inom LUT:s forskningsarbete, samverkan med intressenter och näringsliv, planering av utbildningar, översyn av läroplaner, pedagogisk utveckling samt stöd för internationalisering. Både personal och studerande lyfte fram lärarnas starka engagemang, stödjande lärmiljöer samt integreringen av forsknings- och arbetslivsperspektiv i utbildningarna.

Auditeringen visade också att det finns en stark vilja att utveckla verksamheten. Personalen och ledningen förhöll sig öppet till aktuella utmaningar, särskilt när det gäller den snabba ökningen av antalet studerande, den växande internationaliseringen, pedagogisk utveckling, hantering av arbetsbelastning samt digitaliseringens och den artificiella intelligensens påverkan på undervisning och bedömning.

Samtidigt identifierade auditeringen flera återkommande teman som rörde enhetlighet, uppföljning och universitetsövergripande styrning, särskilt inom utbildningen. Även om ansvaret för utbildningens kvalitetshantering beskrivs tydligt i kvalitetshandboken förekommer variationer mellan utbildningsprogram och fakulteter när det gäller hur processerna genomförs.

LUT har gjort internationalisering till en reell strategisk tyngdpunkt och har genomfört många konkreta åtgärder för att främja den. Det främsta utvecklingsbehovet handlar inte om brist på verksamhet, utan om att göra de system som stöder verksamheten mer synliga, mer enhetliga och tydligare evidensbaserade. Samtidigt förutsätter en hållbar internationalisering en inkluderande vardagskultur där både finländska och internationella studerande och medarbetare kan delta, samverka och känna sig som en del av samma universitetsgemenskap.

Sammantaget konstaterar auditeringsgruppen att LUT-universitetet uppvisar ett starkt strategiskt engagemang för forskning, utbildningskvalitet, studerandecentrerat lärande, internationalisering och kontinuerlig utveckling. Universitetet har en starkt engagerad akademisk gemenskap, ett nära samarbete med näringslivet och välutvecklade strukturer för pedagogiskt stöd. För att ytterligare stärka utbildningens kvalitet skulle universitetet ha nytta av en mer systematisk universitetsövergripande styrning, tydligare uppföljningsprocesser, starkare kvalitetssäkringsmekanismer samt en mer systematisk utvärdering av effekterna av genomförda utvecklingsåtgärder.

## Centrala styrkor och rekommendationer

### Styrkor

- Universitetet har en genomtänkt och ambitiös vision och strategi som utgår från regionala och nationella behov samt från universitetets egna styrkor och utvecklingspotential.
- Universitetet präglas av ett starkt engagemang för kontinuerlig utveckling och förbättring. Detta stöds av en väl förankrad kvalitetskultur och en gemensam förståelse för PDCA-modellen.
- Studerandegemenskapen utgör en betydande och värdefull resurs för hela universitetet.
- Universitetet har ett aktivt och välfungerande samarbete med externa intressenter, näringslivet och alumner. Samarbetet stärker utbildningarnas relevans och universitetets genomslag i samhället, vilket också återspeglas i framgångar i extern forskningsfinansiering.
- Universitetet har tydliga och ambitiösa visioner och mål för sin forskning med fokus på centrala samhällsutmaningar. Universitetet följer systematiskt upp forskningens utveckling och genomslag i samhället i samverkan med regionala aktörer samt genom nationella och internationella utvärderingar av forskningens kvalitet och genomslag. Universitetet arbetar dessutom aktivt med att åtgärda identifierade kvalitetsutmaningar och utvecklingsområden.

- Utvecklingen av utbildningsprogrammen är väl förankrad i universitetets strategiska prioriteringar, såsom hållbarhet, internationalisering, forskningsanknytning och arbetslivsrelevans. Utveckling och utvärdering av utbildningsprogrammen sker i nära dialog med arbetsgivare, företrädare för näringslivet, nationella intressenter, akademisk personal och studerande.

## Rekommendationer

- Universitetet bör utveckla indikatorer och bedömningskriterier som tydligt speglar dess vision, mission, värderingar och strategiska prioriteringar. Detta skulle möjliggöra en systematisk uppföljning av utvecklingen på universitetsövergripande nivå.
- Universitetet bör säkerställa en tydlig och rättidig kommunikation kring större administrativa och organisatoriska förändringar, inklusive ett tidigt och meningsfullt deltagande av studeranderepresentanter i beredningen av förändringarna.
- Universitetet bör ytterligare formalisera sina kvalitetssäkrings- och utvecklingsprocesser och säkerställa att de tillämpas konsekvent inom samtliga utbildningsprogram och fakulteter för att minska variationerna i genomförandet. Universitetet bör också stärka uppföljningen av kurser och utbildningsprogram där kvalitetsbrister har identifierats genom tydliga rutiner som säkerställer att korrigerande åtgärder vidtas, följs upp och leder till avsedda förbättringar.
- Universitetet bör fortsätta att ge riktat stöd till internationella studerandes integration i det finländska arbetslivet och samhället, med särskilt fokus på kunskaper i finska och på att stärka kontakterna till det lokala näringslivet.
- Universitetet bör säkerställa att den växande och alltmer heterogena studerandepopulationen motsvaras av tillräckliga resurser, satsningar på personalens kompetensutveckling samt skalbara processer för kvalitetsutveckling.

# 1 Premise, criteria and implementation of the audit

The audit of Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology, LUT was the first of the two pilot audits conducted in the fourth audit cycle 2025-2030.

A central starting point for the FINEEC audits is the statutory duties defined in higher education legislation, alongside the HEIs' responsibility for their operations and the quality thereof. The Universities Act (558/2009) and the Universities of Applied Sciences Act (932/2014) include binding provisions requiring HEIs to undergo external evaluations of their operations and quality systems regularly and the publication on the results of these evaluations.

In addition to the requirements of national legislation, the audits have a strong European dimension. They integrate the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015). A successful audit by FINEEC demonstrates that the HEI's operations and quality system meet both FINEEC's national and European criteria.

FINEEC's audits of HEIs are guided by the principles of enhancement-led evaluation. The audit supports HEIs in developing their operations, considering each institution's distinctive characteristics, profile and objectives. The enhancement-led evaluation, which considers both the audit process and its outcomes, places emphasis on trust, engagement and a respectful approach to the evaluation subject. In the audit, both the HEI and audit team identify strengths and areas for development in the HEI's operations.

## The purpose of the audit

- To ensure that HEIs maintain and develop the quality of their operations, and to support their continuous, comprehensive and long-term development.
- To ensure that the quality work of HEIs comply with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
- To support strategic management in HEIs, and the implementation of their institutional profiles and core mission objectives.
- To provide stakeholders with information on the operations of HEIs and the development of their quality.

## The objectives of the audit

- To support the competitiveness and attractiveness of the Finnish higher education system.
- To support HEIs in identifying their strengths and improvement areas.
- To support HEIs' foresight and readiness for change.
- To promote and support the planning, implementation, evaluation and development of high-quality education, research, RDI activities, artistic activities and their societal impact.
- To promote and support the well-being, equity, engagement and openness of higher education communities.
- To encourage the internationalisation, collaboration and responsibility of HEIs.
- To promote the development of HEIs' operations by disseminating good practices.

## Evaluation areas and criteria

In the audit, the external audit team assesses the HEI's operations in relation to the national audit criteria. In the LUT audit, the [Audits of higher education institutions 2025–2030. Pilot phase audit manual](#) was applied.

Two evaluation areas were included in the audit:

- Evaluation area I: Strategic management supported by the quality system
- Evaluation area II: Learning supported by teaching and guidance

In addition to the compulsory evaluation areas, LUT selected internationalisation as the audit's strategic cross-cutting theme.

The audit team assessed the evaluation areas I and II as separate entities and used the assessment scale: Excellent, Good, Satisfactory and Insufficient. Evaluation areas I and II must be at least at a satisfactory level for the HEI to pass the audit. The cross-cutting theme chosen by the HEI reflects its profile and ambitions. The audit provides in-depth analysis and targeted feedback on this theme, without influencing the overall audit outcome for the parts which are not included in the criteria.

### *Excellent*

At the level of excellent, the HEI meets all the criteria for the level of good and, in addition, has carried out strategic, long-term and effective development in the evaluation area. The development of the HEI's operations benefits both the HEI and its internal and external stakeholders. The HEI has an innovative and widely inclusive organisational culture, where diverse forms of information are utilised in the management and development of operations. The HEI serves as an example to other HEIs, either nationally or internationally.

### *Good*

The level of good for evaluation areas I and II is described in the [audit manual](#) (pp.12-15).

### *Satisfactory*

At the level of satisfactory, the HEI's operations partially meet the criteria for the level of good. However, in some sub-areas there are clear development needs requiring action to reach the level of good.

### *Insufficient*

At the level of insufficient, there are major shortcomings in the quality of the HEI's operations or its practices for ensuring and developing the quality of its operations are inadequate.

## Implementation of the audit

The audit was based on the Self-Assessment Report and its appendices submitted by the higher education institution, the statistical data compiled by FINEEC, the additional materials requested by the audit team, and the audit team's site visit to the institution on 14–15 April 2026.

The decision on passing the audit was made by the Higher Education Evaluation Committee, operating in connection with FINEEC, based on the report prepared by the audit team.

## Audit team

The audit was conducted by a four-member international audit team:

- Professor, Vice-Chancellor **Birgitta Bergvall-Kåreborn**, Luleå University of Technology (chair)
- Professor **Brian Bowe**, Head of Academic Affairs, Technological University Dublin
- DSc **Hanna Maula**, Senior Vice President of Communications, Marketing, Sustainability & Public Affairs, Neste
- PhD **Esmail Tavakolnia**, master's student, Hanken School of Economics.

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre project managers were Mirella Harri and Eerikki Vainio.

## The central phases and schedule of the audit

|                                                             |               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Agreement of the audit                                      | 15.9.2025     |
| Nomination of the audit team                                | 24.10.2025    |
| Submission of the Self-Assessment Report                    | 23.1.2026     |
| Initial meeting between the HEI management and audit team   | 9.2.2026      |
| Discussion event at the HEI                                 | 9.3.2026      |
| Audit visit                                                 | 14.–15.4.2026 |
| Higher education evaluation committee decision on the audit | 25.8.2026     |
| Publication of the report                                   | 25.8.2026     |
| Final seminar of the audit                                  | 28.8.2026     |
| Audit follow-up                                             | autumn 2028   |

## 2 Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT

*The description below is mainly based on LUT's Self-Assessment Report and Quality Manual.*

Lappeenranta–Lahti University of Technology LUT is a public science university that combines the fields of technology, business and social sciences. The university operates on two main campuses in Lappeenranta and Lahti with additional units in Kouvola and Mikkeli.

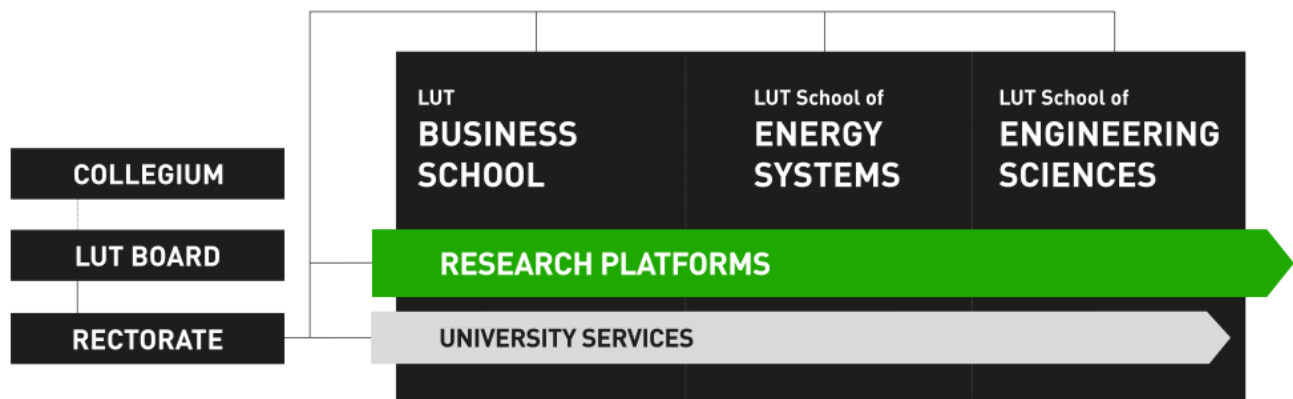
LUT forms a corporate group together with LAB University of Applied Sciences (LAB). The two HEIs engage in close cooperation, including a joint strategy, shared university services and common risk management procedures. The LUT group's growth strategy encompasses four focus areas: research, development and innovation, education, community and growth.

LUT emphasises a multidisciplinary approach to education and research, with a strong focus on sustainability, innovation, and global responsibility. Its mission is to contribute to solving complex global challenges and promote sustainable development through research and education. The university positions itself as a student-centred international research institution that combines scientific excellence with societal impact, guided by its core values: courage to succeed, passion for innovation through science, and will to build well-being.

LUT's strategy, *System Earth 2030*, frames the activities through a systemic understanding of global challenges, particularly those related to sustainability and climate change. The strategy highlights multidisciplinary collaboration and is implemented through four focus areas: planetary resources, energy transition, digital transformation, and business and society. LUT has set strategic objectives for 2030 to strengthen research quality, education, community engagement, and societal impact, while enhancing its international role and contributing to regional and European innovation ecosystems through broad collaboration.

The University Board is the highest decision-making body at LUT. It consists of nine members appointed by the Collegium. The university is led by the Rector, supported by a Provost, two Vice-Rectors, the deans of the three schools, and other members of the management committee. LUT also has an Advisory Board.

LUT is organised into three schools, each headed by a dean: LUT Business School (LBS), the School of Energy Systems (LES), and the School of Engineering Science (LENS), which also includes the field of social sciences. Research platforms are multidisciplinary and integrated within the schools. University services are shared with LAB University of Applied Sciences.



**Figure 1. LUT University's organisation**

LUT University offers undergraduate education in nine technology programmes, one business programme, and one social sciences programme. A new programme in civil and construction engineering is planned to begin in 2027. Doctoral education at LUT is organised into three programmes aligned with the university's schools and their respective research areas. LUT University has approx. 9000 degree students representing over 100 different nationalities, and approx. 1550 staff members of which 950 are academic staff members.

### 3 Evaluation area I: Strategic management supported by the quality system

Evaluation area I assesses the HEI's quality system and its connection to strategic and knowledge-based management. It also assesses how the HEI analyses and anticipates changes and risks in its operating environment, as well as its organisational culture.

Internationalisation, the cross-cutting strategic theme selected by LUT for the audit, is discussed in this evaluation area beyond the audit criteria.

The audit team's assessment for evaluation area I: Good.

## Key strengths and recommendations

### Strengths

The audit team identified the following key strengths across the university's strategic management, quality management processes and organisational culture:

- A well thought out and ambitious vision and strategy that takes its starting point in regional and national needs, and in the university's strengths and its potential growth areas.
- A strong culture of ambition and a clear drive to excel, which is visible across the organisation. The university sets high expectations and has successfully translated its ambitions into tangible results, including increased external research funding and a significant rise in the number of international students. In these areas, LUT demonstrates successful delivery of its vision through clear goals and assessment criteria.
- Internationalisation is a clear strategic priority at LUT, strongly embedded across its core activities and reflecting strong university-wide commitment.
- A strong institutional commitment to continuous improvement and enhancement, supported by an embedded quality culture and a shared understanding of the PDCA approach.
- Well-established practices that ensure both the quality and the societal impact of the university's education.
- Clear and ambitious visions and goals for its research, focused on important societal challenges. Effective evaluation of progress with regional stakeholders in terms of social impact and through national and international evaluations of research quality and impact, while actively addressing insufficient quality and identified challenges in its operations.
- Agile, low-hierarchy organisational culture characterised by high ambition, strong staff satisfaction, a "can-do" attitude, and approachable leadership across all levels.
- Active and productive collaboration with external stakeholders, industry, and alumni, which strengthens programme relevance, societal impact, and is reflected in successful external research funding.
- Has close links with and is actively supported by its student communities, recognising them as an important resource for the university.

- Extensive, highly regarded well-being services, e.g., MOVEO, study psychologists, community coordinators, contribute to high levels of student satisfaction nationally.
- A well-developed pedagogical support ecosystem, including pedagogical training opportunities, digital learning supports, AI guidance, and teaching development services.
- A wide range of support measures for international students and staff, including orientation, peer support, Finnish language opportunities, career and employment support, municipal cooperation and community-building initiatives.

## Recommendations

The audit team recommends that LUT University

- Establishes indicators and assessment criteria that explicitly reflect its vision, mission, values, and strategic priority areas, and enable systematic monitoring of progress towards achieving its vision, mission and university values.
- Ensures clear and timely communication on major administrative and structural changes, including early and meaningful consultation with student representatives.
- Establishes clearer institutional oversight and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that quality responsibilities outlined in the Quality Manual are consistently fulfilled.
- Strengthens its follow-up processes for courses and programmes identified as having insufficient quality by establishing clear and systematic procedures. These should ensure that corrective actions are implemented in all cases, that their effectiveness is monitored, and that the measures taken achieve the intended improvements.
- Strengthens mechanisms for analysing, interpreting, and acting upon student and stakeholder feedback, including consideration of survey reliability and response rates and ensures consistent “feedback-on-feedback” practices.
- Provides teaching staff with dedicated, protected time for pedagogical training and course development, and ensures that teaching is clearly valued and rewarded alongside research.
- Takes more proactive and innovative steps to address gender imbalance in senior academic roles and to close salary gaps in administrative and support staff positions.
- Continues supporting the integration and inclusion of international students and staff through orientation, communication, support services, and clear language practices, while further strengthening interaction between Finnish and international community members.
- Continues targeted integration support for international students for the integration into the Finnish labour market and society, with particular focus on Finnish language skills and stronger links to local industry to ease financial pressures and support entry into the labour market.
- Further clarifies how internationalisation is coordinated, reviewed, and followed up within governance and management processes.

## 3.1 Quality system support for strategic management

### LUT's quality management system supports strategic development

The LUT university clearly describes its vision, mission, values, objectives, principles, and responsibilities across different governing documents. The university's strategy, System Earth 2030 emphasises a multidisciplinary approach to addressing global sustainability challenges across four focus areas. LUT's vision is to be a high-impact, internationally recognised institution that excels in research, education, and societal engagement. The vision, together with related documents, addresses national and international challenges and opportunities while highlighting the university's strengths. The audit evidenced LUT's strong culture of

ambition and a clear drive to excel as a key strength based on multiple interviews. This is visible across the organisation, from leadership to staff, and reflected in daily practices.

LUT could, however, better explain in the documentation how the vision, objectives, principles, and values are interconnected. Currently, the documentation provides limited explanation of how these elements reinforce one another or how the chosen values are expected to contribute to the achievement of the vision and strategic objectives. Readers are partly left to interpret these relationships themselves, which can make it harder to form a fully coherent understanding of the university's future direction and the way forward.

While some interview groups agreed with the audit team's analysis and conclusions, others expressed different views. For example, one group noted that although *Courage to succeed* is not explicitly stated in policy documents, it is still seen as important and reflected in the university's bold goals. This is visible, for instance, in the university's partnerships with big companies and in investments in developing new types of company platforms and collaborative models that differ from traditional ways of working with industry.

The four strategic action plans, Leading Research University, Student-Focused Research University, One LUT, and High Impact University, define concrete actions for achieving the strategic targets in the vision and measures to track progress. The university has clearly defined general key performance indicators aligned with international standards, such as the number of scientific publications, external funding, and the number of students and graduates at bachelor's, master's, and PhD levels. The key performance indicators also reflect the national funding indicators of universities. However, these indicators are not that clearly linked to the vision, mission, values, or the four focus areas outlined in the LUT strategy.

The quality management system thus provides limited assessment criteria for the continuous monitoring of whether the university is progressing in the right direction and achieving its objectives and stated values at the higher system level. For example, the Student-Focused Research University action plan does not include specific performance indicators to measure its success. Instead, progress is assessed through general indicators, together with elements of the educational strategy and the student perspective. At the same time, the university has successfully translated some of its strategic ambitions into tangible results, including increased external research funding and internationalisation. In these areas, LUT demonstrates effective delivery of its vision through clear goals and assessment criteria. The audit team recommends that the university establishes indicators and assessment criteria that explicitly reflect its vision, mission, values, and strategic priority areas, and enable systematic monitoring of progress towards achieving its vision, mission, and university values.

## LUT demonstrates a shared understanding of the PDCA approach and an institutional commitment to continuous improvement

LUT has established the principles, objectives, and responsibilities of its quality management system, which supports its strategy and forms the foundation of its quality work. LUT's quality policy provides a concise framework for quality management, emphasising alignment with the university's mission, values, and strategy. It also highlights the importance of staff and student well-being, continuous improvement, and responsible, transparent, and stakeholder-oriented operations. The quality policy is openly accessible on LUT's website and intranet. The relationship between the core concepts in the quality policy and the university's strategy could be further clarified, particularly in terms of how the quality policy supports the achievement of LUT's strategy, System Earth 2030.

The quality management system is clearly structured and described in the Quality Manual. The purpose of the system is to support the achievement of the university's strategic goals and ensure the high quality of its operations and results, while also supporting university management and the overall pursuit of its goals.

Quality management is integrated into the university's regular activities, guided by the principle of continuous improvement in line with the Plan–Do–Check–Act cycle. The system covers the university's three main functions—scientific research, academic education, and societal interaction—as well as its support services. The university adopts an integrated and developmental approach to quality management. Rather than relying on highly formalised quality assurance processes, responsibility for quality is distributed across institutional roles and embedded within normal university activities. The audit showed that there is a strong institutional commitment to continuous improvement, which is supported by an embedded quality culture and a shared understanding of the PDCA approach.

The responsibilities of different actors are clearly defined in policy documents and on the intranet, and were confirmed in interviews with management, teachers, and support staff. All members of the university community have quality management responsibilities related to their roles. Goals for staff are set through the university's strategy, strategic action plans, annual operational targets, and development discussions, while student goals are defined in personal study plans. The rector is responsible for maintaining and developing the quality management system, supported by a steering committee for quality and sustainability management systems, which is chaired by the provost.

LUT's quality management system provides relevant information that meets identified needs and is used across organisational levels to support strategy implementation and decision-making. Outcomes and feedback are regularly reviewed through transparent and accessible monitoring systems, supporting continuous and structured institutional development and learning. For example, the management team reviews monthly performance indicators at each meeting, with a particular focus on publications, key outcomes, funding, and degrees. The management team also monitors the number of invention proposals and patenting processes, and accepted research projects to gain insight into the composition and development of their research portfolio. In addition, management, teachers, and support staff reflect, for example, on whether their activities contribute measurably to the green economy.

## LUT effectively identifies societal changes and risks in its operations

According to the university, the central principle of internal control is risk management, which includes risk anticipation, identification, assessment, and response. Systematic risk management, along with its underlying principles, is part of the university's performance management and internal control in accordance with good governance practices. The aim is to ensure the continuity of the university's operations and the implementation of its strategy. Recognised strategic risks are discussed and evaluated in management team meetings twice a year and are regularly reported to the board. Strategic and annual planning are guided by performance indicators, feedback, and an understanding of emerging risks and changes in the operating environment.

Foresight, risk management, risk sharing with external actors, and the forecasting of key indicators are integral parts of the university's strategic model and its activities, such as strategic and operational planning, performance management, and financial forecasting. LUT also aims to establish a more systematic approach to foresight to consistently identify changes, risks, and opportunities that may affect the university in both the short and long term.

In early 2025, LUT piloted a foresight method based on the PESTEC<sup>2</sup> tool with school management teams to identify risks and opportunities and to increase understanding of the challenges and opportunities the university may face. The aim was to build a diverse knowledge base to support foresight work more broadly. This work has been applied in strategic and operational planning as well as in risk management. One

example is the identification of potential risks related to the university's ambitious increase in international student recruitment.

The interviews included many concrete examples of how societal changes and trends are identified and how risk assessments are carried out at different levels of the organisation. The process by which the university analyses the future competence needs of different organisations, both in relation to existing programmes and the future pool of potential students nationally and internationally, was particularly strong. Based on these analyses, possible solutions are developed, and their associated risks are assessed. This iterative process has informed the strategy for international student recruitment as well as the development of new degree programmes. As noted in interviews, when the groundwork is carried out thoroughly and the university's position in the market is clearly defined, its offerings can be aligned with how people want to study and with the needs of society and industry.

The interviews also provided similar examples of foresight and risk management related to the employability of international students and decisions to enter new academic or research areas. For example, the expansion into the social sciences was based on similar analyses and risk assessments. As noted in interviews, the decision to enter new academic or research areas is based on a thorough understanding developed through extensive discussions at the national level and with key stakeholders. The audit provided examples in which new programmes were designed to respond to clearly identified needs.

## Internationalisation is a clear strategic priority and is visible across LUT's operations

Internationalisation is a major strategic priority at LUT and a key driver of institutional development. LUT's decision to select internationalisation as a cross-cutting audit theme reflects its growing strategic importance, earlier audit feedback on the university's international development, and the need to examine how rapid international growth can be promoted in a sustainable way.

LUT has taken major steps to increase its international profile in education, research, partnerships, and recruitment. The rapid growth is particularly visible in student intake: LUT reports that 43% of all new students in autumn 2025 came from outside Finland, compared with 10% in 2021. The rapid growth in international student numbers over a short period is particularly impressive, demonstrating strong alignment between strategic intent and implementation. The audit evidence indicated that this focus has been effectively translated into practice, with internationalisation clearly reflected in student and staff recruitment, partner networks, English-language degree provision, double and triple degree cooperation, mobility opportunities, integration support for students and staff, and the increasing diversity of the campus. It was also evident during the audit visit that there was a strong commitment to internationalisation across the university.

A clear strength is that LUT is both ambitious in its internationalisation growth objectives and mindful of the conditions and risks associated with its growth. The university recognises that internationalisation raises questions related to responsibility, partner selection, academic freedom, security, sustainability, integration, language, employability, and inclusion. The self-assessment expressly also acknowledges that the difficulties brought forth by this quick internationalisation must be carefully considered. At the same time, audit visit and workshop discussions suggest that the experience of an international campus culture varies across groups, programmes, and campuses, indicating a need to further reflect on how this growth is experienced and managed in everyday university life.

There is scope to clarify how responsible internationalisation is embedded in LUT's governance, quality management, and risk management processes. LUT has established principles linking internationalisation to ethical, transparent, and risk-aware cooperation with partners, and has developed a partnership management process to coordinate partner selection and related activities across units. However, the evidence does not

clearly show how these principles are reviewed and applied in decision-making, or how they connect to existing partnership, quality assurance, and risk management frameworks.

## 3.2 Strategic development of the quality and impact of education

### LUT has established systems for monitoring and externally reviewing educational quality

The university demonstrates a well-established and coherent approach to pedagogical guidelines and frameworks as evidenced by documentation and audit visit. Its pedagogical approach is based on constructive alignment, which is outlined in the Teacher's Guide available on intranet. This approach promotes student learning and engagement by ensuring that teaching methods, learning activities, and assessment practices are systematically aligned with the intended learning outcomes. According to the self-assessment, constructive alignment has served as the central pedagogical principle at LUT since the national curriculum reform of 2008.

The student-centred approach is also embedded at the strategic level. One of the four Strategy 2030 action plans is titled *Student-Focused Research University*. The action plan's associated development actions focus on strengthening national and international student recruitment, renewing educational leadership and management structures, advancing programme portfolio development, enhancing the community spirit and study experience, and supporting the continuous development of teaching competencies. The strategic focus on improving teaching quality and the student experience was also expressed during the audit visit and is an example of feedback-driven development. As noted in the SAR and audit material, student surveys have highlighted the need to strengthen teachers' pedagogical competencies. Among the follow-up indicators, LUT has set a target of 3.8 (on a scale of 1–5) for course-level feedback, representing an increase from the previous strategic targets of 3.3 at LUT and 3.5 in LUT Business School.

The university employs several systematic procedures to collect student and stakeholder feedback throughout the study lifecycle, including applicant and first-year surveys, course and annual student feedback, and input from international students, graduates, alumni, and thesis commissioners. Together, these provide a comprehensive feedback base to support continuous improvement. Feedback is regularly collected and reported, and structured processes support its use in decision-making and continuous improvement at both university and programme levels. A good practice is the management team's annual review of feedback reports from multiple surveys, through which strengths, improvement areas, and benchmarks are identified to support strategic quality enhancement. At the programme level, annual quality workshops address more specific development needs in bachelor's and master's programmes. These workshops draw on performance data and feedback reports to define development targets, which are published on programme Teams sites to support monitoring.

In addition to feedback, LUT also uses regular external peer evaluations and benchmarking to assess educational quality. The audit team commends the university for its long-term system for external periodic review of its degree programmes through international accreditations. According to its website, most BSc and MSc programmes in business and technology have been regularly accredited. The self-assessment indicates plans to extend accreditation to new programmes, including social sciences and doctoral education. Based on the self-assessment and audit interviews, external accreditations have played a key role in enhancing educational quality by providing international benchmarks, recognition and valuable input for continuous improvement. Overall, the audit documentation and interviews confirm that LUT's feedback and peer review

processes effectively support the identification of strengths and improvement needs and contribute to addressing issues of insufficient quality and other identified problems.

While programme- and course-level processes emphasise the importance of analysing and using feedback for improvement, there is limited evidence of systematic institutional oversight of how feedback is interpreted, acted upon, and monitored. Both documentation and interviews point to challenges in ensuring that identified issues are consistently addressed and lead to expected improvements. Although annual programme reviews generate development actions, the monitoring of their implementation appears uneven and not fully systematic. In some cases, formal follow-up takes place only in the subsequent year's review cycle, and it remains unclear what mechanisms are applied if agreed actions are not implemented.

Interviews with students and staff further suggest that recommendations may occasionally remain unaddressed without clear consequences, even if this was not considered the norm. Both groups provided examples where repeated feedback over several years had not resulted in visible changes or improvements. While university staff described the course evaluation process clearly, the follow-up procedures, intended to ensure that identified improvements are implemented and their impact assessed, were illustrated mainly through individual cases rather than through consistent, formalised practices. The audit team recommends that LUT strengthens its follow-up processes for courses and programmes identified as having insufficient quality by establishing clear and systematic procedures. These should ensure that corrective actions are implemented in all cases, that their effectiveness is monitored, and that the measures taken achieve the intended improvements.

## LUT monitors and develops the societal impact of its educational activities in line with its strategy

The university demonstrates a strong commitment to the societal impact of its education, notably through its focus on graduate employability, work-life relevance, and addressing national demographic challenges. According to LUT's Self-Assessment Report, the university systematically monitors employment outcomes at the time of graduation, one year after, and 3–5 years post-graduation. The feedback summaries from management team and annual programme reviews, provided further evidence of systematic monitoring of employment, salaries, work-life relevance of degrees and competences. In 2023, the employment rate of LUT graduates one year after graduation was 88.6%, placing it among the highest in Finland. Current data also indicate differences across fields of study: business alumni tend to achieve stronger employment outcomes than engineering alumni. LUT's strategic goal is for its graduates' employment rate to be the highest among Finnish universities.

As the share of international degree students increases, LUT recognises the need to strengthen their employability, given their substantially lower employment rate. According to data, international alumni are also more likely to be in fixed-term positions and to experience less stable career paths than domestic graduates. While international students are identified in monitoring data as a separate group, the evidence base could be enhanced through more specific targets, indicators, and follow-up measures.

The audit provided strong evidence of LUT's active and productive collaboration with external stakeholders, industry, and alumni, which reinforces programme relevance and societal impact. According to audit interviews, several programmes have a corporate advisory board to ensure societal relevance. In line with LUT's strategy, the interviews confirmed an aim for programmes that promote sustainable ways of doing business. In addition, there is a genuine interest to understand the market need when developing new programmes, including discussions with different stakeholders. Furthermore, LUT actively expands its educational offerings to meet urgent societal and environmental needs. For example, the recent launch of the

civil and construction engineering programme directly addresses the fact that significant amount of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions originates from buildings, allowing LUT to influence sustainable construction practices.

External stakeholders confirmed that LUT graduates are highly skilled, entrepreneurial, and well prepared for the demands of the labour market. Although entrepreneurship is addressed in studies, alumni report limited entrepreneurial experience, which was identified as a development target in annual programme review data. LUT's proactive approach to societal impact was also evident in its development of continuous learning offer and executive education, such as the EMBA and Procurement Specialist Programmes, which directly upskill the current workforce and provide new revenue streams, supporting LUT's growth.

Overall, the audit confirmed regular annual follow-up combined with target-setting and improvement actions, indicating a structured and evidence-based approach. LUT's well-established practices, systematic monitoring, and strong stakeholder engagement effectively support both the quality and societal impact of its education.

### 3.3 Strategic development of the quality and impact of research

#### LUT has effective practices to ensure and develop the quality of its research

According to LUT's strategy, the university's research, development and innovation activities aim to contribute to a more sustainable world by focusing on four global themes derived from its key research competence areas. The University Board approves the strategic objectives and impact indicators for research, and monitors progress at least annually through its quarterly meetings. Strategy implementation is supported by strategic action plans, including one specifically focused on improving research performance. Each action includes defined indicators that are regularly monitored and discussed by the management team.

The Self-Assessment Report, formal documents, and interviews indicate that the university is committed to a range of national and international guidelines and policies, including the Declaration for Open Science and Research (2025), Good Practice in Researcher Evaluation (2020), the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (2012), and the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (2022). The university has also established its own internal policies and practices to ensure high-quality research and to implement these guidelines.

The provost is responsible for research activities and their strategic development, while deans, heads of departments, and professors leading research groups play key roles in research management and development.

The quality of LUT's research environments is assessed regularly through the Research and Impact Assessment (RIA), which aims to stimulate and encourage world-class research and impact, strengthen the LUT research brand, position its units internationally, assess future research potential, evaluate the success of multidisciplinary collaboration within and beyond the organisation, identify current and emerging research strengths, and assess societal impact, entrepreneurship, and innovative capacity.

The RIA report from 2024 provides examples of recommendations for quality improvement from 2019. However, it is somewhat difficult to follow the full chain from identified weaknesses in 2019, through recommendations, to implemented improvements and their effects in 2024. The report also includes examples of societal impact. At the same time, publicly available information provides limited insight into

assessment results, including identified strengths and weaknesses and the actions taken to address them. Enhancing the accessibility of such information would benefit both staff and external stakeholders.

Both the Self-Assessment Report and interviews highlight the importance of research infrastructure for the university and for the development of current and future research areas. LUT owns a wide range of laboratories and equipment for scientific and technological experiments and has access to relevant national and international research infrastructures. Ensuring the necessary infrastructure and operational expertise requires both sustained funding and competence development.

The need for more strategic development of research infrastructure, including joint investments and shared use with academic and industrial partners, has been recognised and is addressed in the most recent strategic action plan for research. As part of this work, LUT is reviewing its research infrastructures to maximise utilisation and rationalise future investments. Research infrastructure has been identified as a strategic priority for the coming years in order to maintain and strengthen capacity. This is supported by the evaluation group, and LUT's strong collaboration with other universities and industry is a key strength in enabling joint investments and shared use.

To address current and future needs, the university's operating model has been revised to create more open platforms, where dedicated personnel facilitate collaborative research projects among staff and external partners in Finland and abroad. In line with this, a new university-level initiative, the System Earth Collegium, has been launched to advance interdisciplinary research towards radical innovations and scientific breakthroughs. In addition, since 2015 the university has invested internal seed funding in research platforms to support high-level interdisciplinary collaboration between schools and departments. These developments are aligned with the university's vision, strategy, and goals.

The audit confirmed that the university systematically identifies the strengths and areas for improvement of its research and actively addresses insufficient quality and identified challenges. These activities also provide follow-up data on the impact of development measures on research, innovation and development activities.

## LUT monitors and enhances the societal impact of its research in line with its strategy

The university systematically assesses its societal engagement based on indicators and objectives set in its strategy, strategic action plans, and annual operations plan, which are largely focused on LUT's research, development and innovation activities. The indicators are monitored regularly, and the results are communicated in board meetings, management group meetings, and on the LUT intranet.

Examples of impact indicators include:

- 10 showcases of research excellence
- 60% external funding
- Leading European partner in industry collaboration
- A growing number of startups by LUT students, staff, and alumni
- Innovation and commercialisation of research results
- Company cooperation, including strategic partnership companies, the J. Hyneman Center for rapid prototyping, and the assessment of social impact.

As highlighted in the SAR and confirmed in the interviews, the societal impact of LUT's research is mainly monitored and effectively enhanced through strong industry collaboration and external funding. Collaboration with business and industry serves as the primary pathway for societal impact, ranging from joint research centres to commissioned research. The success of this approach is reflected in LUT's external RDI funding, which has increased steadily, reaching €39 million in combined national and international funding in 2025.

To further accelerate this impact, LUT has appointed a Chief Growth Officer whose primary focus is to attract external investments, pursue growth in collaboration with companies, and diversify the university's funding base. As a concrete example of strong stakeholder relations, €12 million of external funding was raised from the market to support a new academic and research programme in civil construction engineering.

LUT has also established new multidisciplinary collaboration platforms with major industry partners such as Peab Asphalt and Kempower (through the Electric Mobility Research Center), which advance high-TRL (Technology Readiness Level) research directly into industrial applications. The Green Campus Open further facilitates the commercialisation of research and has led to successful spin-off companies such as SolarFoods and Aurelia Turbines. However, the University Board acknowledges that commercialising research and "making business out of research" remains a challenging area where further improvement and better data measurement are needed.

In line with this, the university identifies in its strategic action plan the need to strengthen its focus on broader impact beyond traditional academic outputs. As noted in the plan, current key performance indicators emphasise publications and degrees, while future development aims to place greater weight on impact-related measures such as partnerships, innovation activities, external funding, and stakeholder engagement. Planned measures include strengthening industry collaboration, supporting entrepreneurship and new business creation, and enhancing alumni engagement, thereby further reinforcing the university's societal impact.

To support high-impact, transformative research, LUT launched the System Earth Collegium in 2025, aiming to bring together leading international researchers to generate radical innovations. External stakeholders highly value LUT's platform-based ecosystem and recognise both the societal relevance and agility of its research, particularly in collaborative master's-level projects and joint research initiatives. The strategic addition of social sciences in 2022 has further broadened the university's impact by addressing the implementation, regulation, and societal dimensions of technology. Stakeholders and the University Board emphasise that this development is essential for understanding and managing societal change and for strengthening engagement with public authorities.

Overall, strong industry relations, close company collaboration, and the ability to secure external funding are key strengths of LUT. As a suggestion for further improvement, the audit team recommends building on these strengths and exploring further opportunities to expand industry collaboration at the doctoral level, to maximise the use of industry doctorates, deepen societal impact, and address untapped potential in Finnish university–industry collaboration.

## 3.4 Organisational and feedback culture

### LUT's organisational culture is inclusive and open

According to the Self-Assessment Report, LUT's organisational culture is highly inclusive and open, characterised by low hierarchy, approachability, and a strong sense of trust among staff and students. This assessment was echoed in the staff workshop, where participants emphasised the low hierarchy and informality, along with an open atmosphere and a supportive culture of collegiality. According to staff, well-being at work is valued at LUT, and the level of engagement within the community is high. LUT was seen as an appealing and agile university that is adaptive to change and able to effectively adjust its operations and strategy. The rector described culture as the most powerful tool for driving growth and change at LUT, while the University Board characterised it as distinctive, flexible, fast-moving, and similar to a dynamic company.

The community exhibits a strong "can-do" entrepreneurial attitude, which allows the institution to adapt rapidly to changes in the operating environment and foster innovation.

LUT uses surveys to understand where the university currently stands in terms of culture and where they should be. According to management, many steps in culture development have been taken, but further steps and continuous development is needed. There is also a leadership development programme supporting cultural change. A One LUT approach and common strategy for all despite multiple locations was highlighted especially in the leadership interviews. Actions in One LUT strategic action plan focuses particularly on improving leadership, community spirit and well-being.

As the university undergoes significant multi-campus growth across Lappeenranta, Lahti, Kouvola, and Mikkeli, communication and the establishment of unified practices occasionally remain challenging. While the university makes effective use of platforms such as the intranet, eLUT, and the Tuudo app, both staff and students have noted that major administrative decisions, such as the reform of bachelor's level education and the relocation of certain programmes to Lahti, have at times been implemented without sufficient prior consultation. It was also noted in the staff workshop that the use of multiple communication channels in parallel may create confusion, particularly among international members, and can lead to information being scattered. In terms of multiple campuses, staff also highlighted the ongoing challenge of balancing activities and resources across campuses to avoid siloed operations and to genuinely foster a "One LUT" culture, supported by both formal and informal face-to-face interactions.

For students, student organisations are important part of university culture. Student guilds and the Student Union (LTKY) are highly active and collaborate closely with the university administration. Student community is a clear strength and important resource for the whole university. The university also organises, for example, welcoming events, induction week, team building activities, and excursions to help students find new friends and develop social networks with students outside their study programme

Staff, students, and external stakeholders are well-represented in formal decision-making bodies, including the University Collegium, Academic Councils, and the University Board. The university systematically involves external stakeholders through the Advisory Board, programme-specific corporate advisory boards, and the newly established System Earth Collegium. External stakeholders report that their dialogue with the university is regular, fruitful, and appropriately informal. All in all, staff, students and external stakeholders participate in and have opportunities to influence the planning and development of the HEI's activities.

However, some students indicated during the audit visit that their opportunities to influence decision-making are limited, particularly in forums where they are not directly represented. This concern relates both to the early preparatory stages of curriculum development, where key decisions are made, and to later stages in Academic Councils, where programmes are often already largely finalised, leaving limited scope for student input. Some students also expressed a desire for stronger representation at the highest levels, including the addition of a second student seat on the University Board.

## LUT should improve course feedback response rate and feedback to students on their feedback

LUT possesses a comprehensive student feedback system as mentioned above. Feedback is systematically processed in annual degree programme quality workshops, where programme heads, teachers, and student guild representatives collaboratively review results and plan improvements, and in management annual reviews. LUT has systematically monitored student feedback as an indicator of teaching quality. Trend data show improvements in student feedback, particularly in the National Bachelor's Survey, where LUT students

consistently rated overall satisfaction and opportunities to influence their education highly (4.0 out of 5). This provides one example of the effectiveness of quality improvements at LUT.

Despite these well-established structures, response rates for course feedback remain relatively low (30–40%) as also noted in the SAR. While this is a common challenge across many higher education institutions, improving participation is particularly critical for LUT, where student feedback plays a central role in the quality management system. Low response rates risk introducing bias, weakening the reliability of the data, and limiting its usefulness for course-level enhancement.

As discussed above, discussions with students during the audit workshops suggest that the extent to which feedback leads to meaningful change varies considerably between teachers. While some teachers respond promptly and adjust their courses based on feedback, others are perceived as not addressing it at all. As a result, students reported that course feedback does not consistently translate into visible improvements in teaching. At the same time, leadership interviews indicate that courses with an average feedback score below 3.3 do trigger follow-up discussions with the responsible teacher, pointing to a formal mechanism for quality intervention that may not always be visible to students.

A critical gap identified by students was the lack of feedback-on-feedback. Based on the discussions, students are rarely informed about what changes were made based on their suggestions. Some students also expressed a wish for feedback mechanisms to extend to teaching assistants. According to LUT's intranet, feedback on courses should be provided through the same platform used to collect course feedback. The intranet offers clear guidance for teachers on how and when to provide such responses in the platform. However, in practice, providing feedback-on-feedback still appears to be voluntary. This is further reflected in monitoring data from annual feedback reviews, which indicate that the practice is not yet implemented consistently across courses.

LUT would benefit from presenting feedback-to-action more explicitly, including the feedback source, the decision or action taken, and any follow-up on effect. Beyond informing students about actions taken in response to their feedback, this issue is important because the SAR recognises that much student-driven development occurs informally, for instance, through conversations after lectures or direct email exchanges. Informal feedback can be valuable, but it may be difficult to trace unless it is captured and followed up systematically. LUT would benefit from better ways to collect informal feedback, include it in visible quality processes, and communicate to students and staff what actions have been taken. Strengthening these processes would help improve student motivation to provide feedback and increase response rates in course feedback.

## 3.5 Diversity and well-being at work and in studies

### Proactive and innovative approaches needed to address gender imbalances

The university has an Equality and Non-discrimination Plan, separate plans for staff and students, covering both gender equality and broader non-discrimination, including recognition of non-binary identities. Plans explicitly prohibit discrimination on multiple grounds, such as age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political or trade union activities, family relationships, health, disability, and sexual orientation. The plans promote equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in employment, career development, professional growth, participation, and decision-making. Equality across campuses is also addressed. However, while these policies and objectives are clearly articulated, evidence of their systematic

implementation and ongoing monitoring is less clearly documented. Based on the audit visit, monitoring is largely based on tracking feedback data.

LUT promotes diversity and non-discrimination through the dedicated equality plans. The plans explicitly address the reconciliation of work and family life through flexible working hours, remote work, and parental leave encouragement. They also highlight the value of age diversity, recognising both the tacit knowledge of senior staff and the fresh insights of younger employees. The university also aims to improve physical and digital accessibility, updating platforms like the Tuudo app. Information and support materials are also available to staff on the intranet, including resources on supporting diverse learners. There were also positive examples of promoting equality beyond gender, such as the university's provision of designated "silence rooms" on both the Lahti and Lappeenranta campuses to accommodate the diverse cultural and religious practices of its staff.

However, the university faces ongoing structural challenges in achieving gender balance. Women remain heavily underrepresented in advanced academic and technical roles, comprising only 10% of full professors. The university acknowledges the ongoing challenge of attracting female applicants in certain technical and engineering fields. This is reflected in the tenure track statistics, which show a heavy skew towards male academics. Women make up only 10% of professors (5 women compared to 45 men) and 34.4% of tenured professors (11 women compared to 21 men). In the tenure track system, women account for 20% of Assistant professors and 28.6% of Associate professors. A gender imbalance persists also in some "Other staff" job titles (e.g., Secretaries: 95.3% women; Engineers: 11.5% women). However, the gender distribution is perfectly balanced at the top management level.

The staff salary statistics show men's average salary is consistently higher across the 'Other staff' and there was no clear action plan to change this. Despite women holding most leadership roles, a pay gap persists in senior positions: among administrative staff, women earn 90.2% of men's salaries. The salary data at the highest academic positions is often hidden, which makes it difficult to compare salaries. On the other hand, where data is available at level 9 in the university salary system for teaching and research staff, women earn more than men.

Based on the interview with the Rectorate, the university has also discussed gender and equality issues with the professors' union. According to the Staff Members' Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan, pay systems are intended to promote equality, with salaries based on job demands, individual competence, and performance. However, interviews and available data provide limited evidence of concrete actions to address existing imbalances, despite open recruitment processes. It was also noted in audit interviews that, given the current gender structure, recruitment committees may consist entirely of men, which can influence outcomes. The audit team recommends that more proactive and innovative internal measures are taken to address gender imbalances.

In the Rectorate interview, it was noted that LUT actively promotes engineering opportunities for women and participates in relevant networks. On the other hand, both the Rectorate and the deans emphasised in their interviews that meaningful change cannot be achieved through university recruitment efforts alone. It requires broader societal shifts in attitudes and interventions earlier in the education system. To combat this, LUT collaborates with other Finnish technical universities and invests in initiatives like *Mimmit koodaa* (Women Code) to attract more female students to the field.

An online equality and non-discrimination training was created in Moodle in April 2023. This training is a mandatory part of the orientation process for new employees, which they must complete within their first three months. The training is also open to all existing staff members. It would be beneficial to make the training compulsory for all staff members ensuring the effective implementation of the policy across university.

The Student Union takes an active role in promoting diversity and equal treatment, for example, it proactively appoints harassment contact persons for events, aiming to provide a safe space for all. Based on the audit, there are opportunities for closer cooperation with the Student Union in promoting diversity and equal treatment, given its systematic approach to preventing all forms of harassment and monitoring the effectiveness of its policies.

## Inclusion, language and communication need continued attention as internationalisation grows

As mentioned, LUT has undergone rapid internationalisation and has recognised integration as an important university-level issue. This involves trying to ensure that international students and staff can participate, feel included, and have equal access to services, communication, studies, work-life opportunities, and university life. The SAR notes that the pace of growth challenges orientation, onboarding, and responses to increasing diversity, while also creating emerging needs as operating models, processes, and resources continue to evolve. The audit team found strong evidence that the university is making significant efforts to support international students and promote their integration into Finnish society and work life. However, both staff and students indicated that further development is still needed, particularly in orientation, communication, community integration, and employment pathways.

The audit material shows a wide range of practical support for international students. These measures include general and programme-specific orientation, dedicated international orientation sessions, pre-orientation, peer tutoring, Finnish language opportunities, career counselling, job search support, networking opportunities, and cooperation with municipalities, government agencies, and student associations. The SAR also notes the appointment of student community coordinators on both campuses in 2025 as a recent initiative to support student integration into the LUT community. Official student communication is provided in both Finnish and English, and LUT uses multiple channels, including eLUT, Tuudo, campus screens, Moodle, and email.

For international employees, the evidence also shows a range of support measures. LUT provides bilingual communication, Finnish language courses, weekly information desk support, arrival counselling, Welcome to Finland webinars, LUT PALs activities, events for international staff and their families, and cooperation with local city services through International Houses. Recruitment is described as open, transparent, and merit-based, with an international focus, particularly for teaching and research positions. The tenure-track process likewise follows an open international search based on merit, with clearly defined criteria and documented decisions.

These are significant strengths, demonstrating that LUT is not only attracting international students and staff but also actively supporting their participation in the university community and Finnish society.

The SAR notes that the expansion of English-language teaching has prompted discussion and the need to clarify language policies, while also highlighting that internationalisation challenges both international and Finnish teachers, as differences in academic cultures and language practices can affect guidance, group work, course instructions, inclusion, and learning outcomes. Audit workshops revealed that integrating international students with domestic students remains a practical challenge, as nationalities often form separate groups in classes and social settings. This suggests that, while LUT has been successful in attracting a significant number of international students, there is still potential to further develop a more integrated international campus environment and a need for strategies and activities that bring different student groups together. For international staff, while English is actively used as a working language, integration requires continuous effort to overcome cultural barriers, implicit expectations, and the navigation of Finnish administrative systems.

The audit team also found that, although LUT has sound bilingual communication and flexible language practices, its language principles could be made more explicit and easier to apply across contexts. LUT could

define more clearly the expectations related to teaching, assessment and submission, meeting practices, and communication, supporting a more consistent and transparent approach.

Similarly, while the principle of equal access to student services is clear, the distinction between universal services for all students and targeted support for international students is less visible. Clarifying when services are the same, when tailored support is needed, and the rationale behind this would strengthen inclusion and make the service model easier for students and staff to understand.

The Integration Plan provides a useful structure for LUT's work with international students, covering areas such as student recruitment, social integration, integration in teaching, Finnish language and culture, professional development, career services and employer cooperation. The plan also identifies responsible actors, existing activities and development ideas for several stages of the integration process. To further strengthen this work, LUT could make the monitoring, evaluation and follow-up of the overall integration plan more visible, including how progress is reviewed, how outcomes are assessed, and how development actions are followed up over time.

## Active support for international students' integration into society and labour market still needed

The extraordinary growth in the number of international students also necessitates robust integration efforts to transition these talents into Finnish society and the local labour market. To address the integration of a growing international student body into the Finnish labour market, a challenge recognised by both the university and regional stakeholders, LUT has developed several targeted initiatives. External partners also emphasised that successful integration is increasingly a national priority due to demographic trends.

To support international talent retention, LUT has introduced the Career Spark salary support programme, which lowers the threshold for companies to hire international students for internships and thesis projects. In addition, the Future Talent project in Lahti was launched in response to local employers' concerns about future workforce availability. The project connects 33 local companies with students through regular networking, dedicated coordinators, and social media engagement, directly addressing regional labour market needs. Audit materials and workshops highlight a range of other support measures, including career services, job search support, Finnish language studies, networking, guest lectures, job shadowing, Duuniday, company visits, project work with companies, and work-life elements in courses. The SAR also describes systematic monitoring of company collaboration in courses through course description updates, PowerBI reporting, and teacher surveys. These are all a clear strength.

International students face immense barriers entering the Finnish labour market due to strict language requirements from local companies. LUT should continue to actively support international students in acquiring Finnish language skills and local networks to further enhance their employability and retention within Finland, leveraging its strong relationships with cities and other stakeholders to lower recruitment barriers.

## Quality processes and feedback sources support the development of internationalisation

A clear strength is that LUT draws on several feedback sources relevant to internationalisation, including general student feedback, graduate feedback, quality workshops, well-being surveys, staff surveys, and the International Student Barometer. Evidence from the audit visit also indicated that feedback is discussed at management level and that student representatives are involved in feedback processes. Together, these practices provide a solid basis for identifying internationalisation-related issues and informing development actions.

LUT has begun analysing feedback and indicators for international degree students as a distinct group, helping to identify specific needs and patterns. Interviewees noted that LUT monitors internationalisation using indicators such as the number of international students, degree-related data, and co-publications, including measures that identify the share of non-Finnish participants. Surveys also include a question on whether respondents are Finnish or non-Finnish, enabling comparisons between these groups. This reflects a move toward a more differentiated use of data rather than treating students as a single uniform group. The audit visit highlighted feedback-informed development, including improved communication on career and employment services following lower International Student Barometer scores, and the introduction of cultural ambassadors based on survey feedback.

While the audit visit provided useful examples, the material did not clearly show how feedback is systematically translated into decisions, actions, and follow-up across different feedback sources. The overall approach could also be strengthened by systematically reviewing outcomes by nationality or assessing the impact of key measures, such as Career Spark, Finnish language pathways, career counselling, and employer cooperation.

Overall, LUT would benefit from more clearly documenting ownership, review structures, indicators, follow-up cycles, and feedback-to-action across key areas of internationalisation. This would strengthen the university's ability to demonstrate how internationalisation is planned, implemented, monitored, improved, and experienced in practice.

## The well-being of staff and students is a key strategic priority at LUT

LUT promotes well-being at work and in studies and recognises in its 2030 strategic action plan that well-being is central to a thriving higher education community. The strategic actions focus on strengthening self-awareness of staff and students about their well-being, improving internal communication and organising shared LUT events, and identifying structural factors that affect well-being. The LUT University's HR Strategy from 2024 also specifies the development objectives in well-being of faculty and staff. The three main strategic areas—Getting talented people, Environment for growth, and Best place to belong—are operationalised through seven HR goals. The university is also committed to the European Commission's HR Strategy for Researchers, which promotes, for example, the development of researchers' working conditions and their international mobility.

As mentioned, LUT is also investing in leadership development and, in its 2030 action plan, recognises good leadership as essential for strengthening the community and its well-being. Academic and non-academic career paths are clarified through the sharing of best practices, knowledge, and mentoring across education, research, and services, while valuing good leadership and ensuring that academic leadership is recognised and allocated sufficient time as an integral part of the work. Staff satisfaction at LUT is exceptionally high, with an Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) of 42, significantly above the Finnish university average of 24. However, audit interviews also highlighted that recent occupational health data indicates an overall increase in stress and mental health cases due to demanding university targets and modern work life pressures. LUT is addressing these challenges through early support models and Mental Health First Aid training. Based on the interviews, employee well-being is considered one of the university's key risks and is monitored by the University Board as part of change management-related risks. The university has a change management programme in place, and the strategic action plan addresses the work atmosphere and staff well-being by strengthening interactive leadership and developing tools to support staff well-being.

Well-being in studies is supported by comprehensive services including MOVEO sports, study psychologists, university chaplains, and student community coordinators. During the audit visit, the *Mental Health Mondays* initiative was highlighted as an example of support for student well-being, particularly mental health. These

efforts are largely successful, as LUT students consistently rate their overall comfort at the university exceptionally high. During the workshops, students highlighted that their well-being is generally well supported by flexible study options and approachable staff. They also provided positive feedback on, for example, the accessible community spaces, which were seen as contributing positively to student well-being. In addition, the presence of study advisors in these spaces was particularly appreciated, as they were considered highly supportive and helpful to students.

However, workshops with students brought also specific well-being challenges to light. Students report that well-being is sometimes hindered by highly uneven workloads across different courses that award the same ECTS credits, causing unnecessary stress and confusion. Furthermore, students suggested that replacing purely theoretical, repetitive tasks (like essays) with more practical, industry-linked projects would significantly improve motivation, reduce academic fatigue, and better prepare them for work life. In addition, financial concerns, sleep problems, and stress related to future job prospects remained recurring challenges, particularly for international students adjusting to life in Finland. At the same time, feedback from the OLS teaching quality surveys conducted by the Student Union LTKY presented in the feedback review shows a positive trend, with fewer students reporting concerns about their mental health. Although the proportion has nearly halved since 2023, it still accounts for around one quarter of students in 2025, underscoring the ongoing need for targeted support.

## 3.6 Staff recruitment and competence development

### The development of staff teaching skills is supported with extensive pedagogical development opportunities

LUT employs open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment processes, utilising international calls and a structured four-level tenure track system with clear criteria for advancement. As a rule, vacancies are announced to the public and open for applications – mainly internationally in the case of research and teaching vacancies. This allows the most qualified applicants to pose their candidacy. Scientific and educational merits are considered in the filling of all research and teaching vacancies. Further information on recruitment and separate instructions for the appointment of professors, docents, junior researchers are available on the LUT intranet, relevant information to external applicants is available on the LUT websites. LUT has the ambition to carry out recruitment processes that emphasise equality, non-discrimination, and fairness in recruitment.

The university could identify and analyse the strengths and weaknesses of culturally different approaches and critically compare them with national norms and alternative ways of thinking and doing. The recruitment support could, for example, include clear guidelines for drafting recruitment texts based on research on language that appeals to different genders and avoids deterring applicants, systematic processes for units to identify potential candidates within their networks, and encouragement for staff to actively seek and gather recommendations from colleagues on suitable candidates.

Staff competence needs are systematically identified during annual development discussions. The university provides extensive pedagogical development opportunities for staff, including teaching qualifications, pedagogical courses, digital learning supports, AI workshops, and guidance from the teaching support team. LUT offers a comprehensive 25-credit university pedagogy training programme, which is heavily encouraged and technically required for tenure track progression to full professorship. Staff consistently identified these supports as a significant institutional strength.

Staff also highlighted challenges relating to increasing workloads, lack of time for pedagogical development, increasing student numbers, and the need for more continuous and discipline-specific support. A chronic lack

of time to engage in formal pedagogical training or comprehensive course development was linked to full schedules and the strong prioritisation of research responsibilities. The emergence of artificial intelligence and digitalisation was identified as a key theme in the audit, and as noted below, staff would need further guidance and support in this area.

## 4 Evaluation area II: Learning supported by teaching and guidance

Evaluation area II assesses how the HEI plans, implements and develops its degree programmes and continuous learning provision to support education that is student-centred, research-based and connected to work life.

The audit team's assessment for evaluation area II: *Good*

### Key strengths and recommendations

#### Strengths

The audit team identified the following key strengths across the university's educational provision and quality management processes:

- Strong alignment between programme development and the university's strategic priorities, including sustainability, internationalisation, research integration, and labour market relevance.
- Extensive consultation with employers, industry representatives, national stakeholders, academic staff, and students during programme development and review. Strong emphasis on industry engagement, practical learning opportunities, and work-life integration within many programmes.
- Strong examples of student-centred teaching and supportive staff–student relationships identified consistently through student feedback and review meetings.
- Effective use of collaborative review processes, including Annual Internal Assessment and Quality Workshops, education management meetings, and student guild engagement.
- Good institutional supports for students, including career services, counselling supports, study guidance, and flexible study arrangements.
- Strong collegial culture among staff, with examples of peer learning, collaborative teaching development, and sharing of pedagogical practices.
- Continuous learning provision is well connected to degree education and work-life needs, with open university studies linked to degree curricula and customised continuing education planned in cooperation with clients, schools, and lecturers.

#### Recommendations

The audit team recommends that the university

- Develops more formalised and consistently applied quality assurance and enhancement processes across all programmes and schools to reduce variability in implementation. Strengthens the monitoring and evaluation of annual programme review actions to ensure development targets are implemented and followed through consistently.
- Introduces more robust approaches for evaluating teaching quality and pedagogical effectiveness beyond student feedback alone, including peer review and evidence of student learning outcomes.
- Develops clearer institutional expectations and monitoring processes regarding the use of curriculum analysis tools, constructive alignment practices, and annual curriculum review activities.

- Improves the systematic monitoring of student workload, including assessment scheduling and the relationship between ECTS weighting and actual student effort.
- Develops clearer institutional processes for embedding work-integrated learning and industry engagement consistently across programmes.
- Develops clearer institutional guidance and shared practices regarding the pedagogical use of artificial intelligence and its implications for assessment and academic integrity.
- Ensures that the increasing scale and diversity of the student population is matched by sufficient resourcing, staff development, and scalable quality enhancement processes.
- Clarifies the institutional objectives, KPI framework and portfolio-level planning process for continuous learning, including non-financial objectives, monitoring and assessment responsibilities, and clearly documenting feedback-to-action.

## 4.1 Planning of degree programmes

### Programme development is strongly aligned with the university's strategic ambitions and informed by labour market needs and research

The educational provision at LUT University encompasses undergraduate programmes leading to bachelor's and master's degrees, doctoral education leading to PhD qualifications, and a broad range of lifelong learning opportunities.

LUT University currently provides undergraduate education across a broad range of technology, business, and social science programmes, with further programme expansion planned, including the introduction of a civil and construction engineering programme in 2027.

LUT University demonstrates a strong strategic approach to the planning and development of degree programmes. Programme development is informed by institutional strategy, stakeholder consultation, labour market needs, sustainability priorities, and the university's research profile.

As noted above, the audit confirmed that the university gives careful consideration to the development of new programmes and that programme proposals are underpinned by strategic importance, foresight, and risk assessment. Examples identified during the audit included the introduction of social science programmes in 2022 and the planned development of civil and construction engineering programmes commencing in 2027.

The Degree Regulations provide a clear institutional framework for curriculum development and programme approval. The regulations define the objectives of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programmes and ensure alignment with the Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules. The regulations also define the application of ECTS credits, recognition of prior learning, enrolment requirements, curriculum structures, and assessment rules.

The audit team found that programme planning processes are generally well aligned with institutional priorities and external stakeholder needs. Interviews with the Rectorate confirmed that new programmes are developed through extensive consultation with industry representatives, professors, and national stakeholders to identify societal and labour market needs.

The audit identified strong examples of research-based education across the university. Academic staff actively integrate current research, research projects, and research outputs into teaching activities, course content, and student learning experiences. Staff indicated that the integration of research into teaching occurs naturally within the university because most academic staff are engaged in both teaching and research activities. Students also participate in research through thesis work, project activities, innovation events, and

engagement with research-informed teaching practices. The university's strategic focus on sustainability and applied research further strengthens the integration between research and education.

The audit found that degree programmes generally have clearly defined learning outcomes and that the university has adopted constructive alignment as its pedagogical approach. The Curriculum Analysis Tool represents an important mechanism intended to ensure alignment between programme learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment approaches, and student workload. The Annual Curriculum Work process, including the Annual Internal Assessment and Quality Workshops provide important opportunities for curriculum review, programme evaluation, and enhancement. These processes incorporate programme performance data, student feedback, progression statistics, and workload considerations.

However, while the institutional framework for curriculum review is well developed, the audit team identified variability in the consistency and rigour with which these processes are implemented across the university. Based on the available evidence, the audit team could not confirm a fully systematic approach, as it was not always clear how frequently the Curriculum Analysis Tool is used, how consistently constructive alignment practices are monitored, or how the quality of implementation is assured. The quality of programme planning and curriculum enhancement is also heavily dependent on the engagement and pedagogical capability of individual programme leaders and teaching staff. Although the Quality Manual clearly defines responsibilities, there appears to be limited institutional oversight regarding how consistently those responsibilities are fulfilled.

The audit also identified many examples of effective engagement with employers and industry within programme design and delivery. Industry collaboration includes work placements, case studies, guest lectures, company visits, and practical assignments linked to professional contexts. However, while many examples of excellent practice exist, the implementation of work-life integration appears inconsistent across programmes and often dependent on the initiative of individual teaching staff or programme leaders. The university has acknowledged the need to strengthen and standardise stakeholder engagement and work-life integration processes.

Internationalisation is a central component of LUT University's educational strategy and programme development activities. Degree education is offered in both Finnish and English across all study cycles, reflecting the university's strong international orientation. Programmes are also designed to support international mobility and internationalisation at home. The university's participation in international networks and alliances, including the EULIST alliance, provides opportunities for student mobility, collaborative teaching, and joint educational activities. LUT has mobility channels such as Erasmus, bilateral agreements and Nordplus, and it expects EULIST to create further opportunities for course selection and virtual collaboration. The university also recognises challenges associated with physical mobility participation rates and is increasingly focusing on alternative forms of internationalisation, including short and e-mobility and internationalisation within Finland. The SAR outlines the intended development of mobility windows, recognition of studies completed elsewhere, and internationalisation at home. Audit visit discussions further illustrated how these are being put into practice, including mobility windows in degree structures, study plan guidance, short and virtual mobility, double degree arrangements, summer schools, cross-cultural student groups, and recognition of prior learning. Together, these examples indicate that LUT is developing multiple pathways for students to gain international experience beyond long-term physical mobility. There is scope for LUT to make mobility opportunities, recognition procedures, and internationalisation-at-home more visible at programme level, which would help students better understand their options and ensure a consistent implementation across programmes.

The university applies ECTS principles appropriately within programme design, with one ECTS credit corresponding to 27 hours of student work. Student workload is considered through curriculum planning processes and annual curriculum workshops. Nevertheless, students reported variability in workload distribution across some programmes and highlighted challenges relating to clustering of continuous

assessment deadlines and inconsistencies between ECTS weighting and actual workload demands. Students also indicated that assessment weighting did not always appear proportionate to the workload associated with successfully completing assignments.

Overall, the audit team concludes that LUT University demonstrates strong strategic alignment, significant commitment to research-based education, and many effective practices relating to programme planning and internationalisation. However, the university would benefit from more systematic and consistently applied quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that good practices are implemented consistently across all programmes and schools.

## 4.2 Data-driven and participatory development of degree programmes

### The development of degree programmes, teaching and guidance is based on data and engagement

The audit found that LUT University demonstrates a strong culture of engagement and collaboration in the development of education, teaching, and guidance. Students, staff, employers, and external stakeholders all contribute to programme review and enhancement activities through a variety of formal and informal mechanisms. Students actively participate in programme development through student guilds, feedback systems, representation on committees, and engagement in programme annual review workshops. Student guild representatives play an important role in collecting and summarising feedback from students and contributing to programme enhancement discussions.

Examples identified during the audit included regular programme meetings involving student representatives and staff, where feedback is reviewed collaboratively and actions are discussed. Students consistently reported that staff were approachable, responsive, and supportive. The university employs a broad range of feedback and monitoring mechanisms, including course feedback questionnaires, annual student surveys, graduate surveys, programme statistics, progression data, and annual review workshops.

The Annual Internal Assessment and Quality Workshops represent an important institutional mechanism for programme review and enhancement. These workshops support collaborative reflection on programme performance, curriculum alignment, assessment, workload distribution, and student feedback. The audit also identified strong examples of collaborative teaching culture and collegial engagement among staff. Staff described a supportive environment where teachers share pedagogical practices, learn from each other, and engage with teaching development initiatives.

The university also demonstrates strong engagement with labour market stakeholders and employers. Programme design and review processes are informed by external consultation, and many programmes incorporate industry-linked learning activities, projects, and professional engagement opportunities. Career Services provides a broad range of supports for students, including workshops, career counselling, job portals, recruitment events, and work-life preparation activities. Staff are encouraged to integrate work-life perspectives into teaching and curriculum design. However, despite the broad range of engagement mechanisms, the audit identified some concerns regarding the consistency, monitoring, and evaluation of these processes.

The audit team found that participation and engagement in the annual quality workshops vary considerably between programmes and schools. In several areas, processes rely heavily on local initiative, informal practices, or the commitment of individual staff. The university places significant reliance on student feedback as a primary mechanism for evaluating teaching quality and programme effectiveness. While student

feedback is clearly valued and actively used within many programmes, the audit team identified, as mentioned above, concerns regarding low response rates and the absence of systematic evaluation of the reliability and statistical significance of survey data. The Self-Assessment Report itself acknowledges response rate challenges and recognises that lower response rates may disproportionately capture negative experiences.

The audit team also found that while the university places strong emphasis on constructive alignment and pedagogical quality, there is limited systematic evaluation of how effectively learning outcomes, teaching approaches, and assessments are aligned within individual modules and programmes.

## 4.3 Teaching, guidance and support for learning

### Teaching and guidance support goal-oriented studies and the active role of students in their learning process

Based on the audit, LUT University provides a generally supportive, student-centred learning environment that encourages active student engagement and goal-oriented learning. The university operates within clearly defined regulations and guidelines relating to admissions, studies, curriculum requirements, progression, assessment, graduation, and recognition of prior learning. These regulations are publicly available and provide an important framework for educational delivery and quality management.

Students consistently highlighted the supportive nature of teaching staff and positively described learning environments where teachers were approachable, engaged, and responsive to student needs. Many students described experiences where teachers actively supported learners with different levels of prior knowledge and ensured that students could progress successfully through challenging courses. Students also positively identified learning experiences that effectively combined theory and practice, including project-based learning, laboratory work, group activities, industry-linked assignments, guest lectures, and practical applications.

The audit found strong examples of pedagogical approaches that promoted active learning, student participation, collaboration, and engagement. Structured courses with regular assignments, discussions, iterative projects, and interactive teaching approaches were particularly valued by students. Students also identified the importance of clear course structures, regular deadlines, feedback opportunities, and practical learning experiences in supporting their motivation, confidence, and understanding.

The university provides a range of supports intended to accommodate diverse student groups, including study guidance, counselling services, career supports, individual study arrangements, and supports for students with learning or attention difficulties. The growing diversity of the student body, particularly the increasing number of international students, has prompted the university to expand support services and develop additional preparatory and bridging supports. The audit found that the university demonstrates strong awareness of the challenges associated with supporting a diverse student population. Staff and students acknowledged ongoing efforts to strengthen orientation, integration, and support mechanisms for international students.

Career planning and work-life skills development are integrated into programmes through introductory courses, Career Services activities, employer engagement, and work-life perspectives within teaching. However, while many strong examples exist, the implementation of work-life integration and practical learning opportunities appears inconsistent across programmes. Students and staff both identified the need for greater consistency, stronger industry engagement, and more systematic integration of practical and professional learning experiences.

The university also demonstrates a strong commitment to ethical practice and academic integrity. Students commit to institutional ethical guidelines at the beginning of their studies, and the university has updated guidance relating to the responsible use of artificial intelligence within coursework and thesis work. The emergence of generative AI is recognised by the university as a major challenge for teaching and assessment practices, and the university has identified the need to reconsider traditional assessment approaches and develop new methods that remain appropriate within changing educational contexts. Staff acknowledged strong institutional efforts to provide support and guidance, but also highlighted the need for clearer institutional policies, shared practices, and strategic direction regarding AI in teaching and assessment.

The audit identified significant strengths within student support services and pedagogical supports. Staff in audit workshops highly praised the responsive, on-demand technical and pedagogical support provided by the Opetushelp and Digital Learning teams. However, the effectiveness of teaching quality, curriculum alignment, guidance, and support services remains heavily dependent on the commitment and practices of individual staff and programmes.

Students also identified areas where support and communication could be strengthened, including:

- More consistent orientation and support for international students;
- Clearer programme information and communication;
- Greater consistency in feedback quality;
- Improved contingency arrangements regarding key staff contacts;
- More transparent use of student feedback;
- Better alignment between assessment workloads and student expectations.

Staff similarly identified the need for stronger coherence, consistency, and scalability across programmes, particularly in response to increasing student numbers, workload pressures, technological change, and the growing diversity of student needs.

Overall, the audit team concludes that LUT University demonstrates many strengths in student-centred teaching, supportive learning environments, pedagogical engagement, and student support services. The university has established a strong foundation for active student learning and engagement. However, more systematic institutional oversight and consistency would further strengthen the quality and sustainability of the student learning experience across all programmes.

## 4.4 Continuous learning

### Continuous learning is strategically recognised and connected to work life and degree education

Continuous learning is strategically recognised at LUT University and is operationally established. In the Self-Assessment Report, continuous learning is described as a shared priority for LUT University and LAB University of Applied Sciences. It is linked to the needs of work life, companies, alumni, adult learners, open university students, and learners seeking more flexible educational pathways. The joint LUT Universities action plan also includes a financial target for fee-based training, excluding open university education. This indicates that continuous learning is not treated as an isolated activity, but as an integral component of the broader strategic direction of LUT and LAB.

The audit team found several strengths in how continuous learning is connected to degree education and work life. Open university courses are based on LUT's degree education and are planned in connection with degree programme curriculum development. Heads of degree programmes decide which open university

courses are offered, using information such as previous registration rates and popular trends. This creates a clear link between open university provision and degree education. In customised continuing education, the planning starts from client and participant needs, and the provision is developed in cooperation with schools, lecturers, companies, and the continuing education team. This supports the relevance of the provision for work life.

LUT would benefit from clarifying its university-level objectives and KPIs for continuous learning. Based on the available evidence, there are some financial growth targets and some operational indicators, such as revenue, profitability, credits, student feedback, and applicants, enrolled students, and graduates in work-compatible master's programmes. The university-level objectives could also include non-financial goals, such as accessibility, learner benefits, target-group reach, quality, or wider impact.

## Continuous learning planning would benefit from clearer portfolio-level documentation

LUT's planning of continuous learning appears flexible and responsive. The SAR describes that continuing education is planned by the Study Services continuous education team in collaboration with schools, following national provisions and considering different target groups. The planning also includes benchmarking against other universities, competitors, and private operators. Target groups include alumni, companies, managers, supervisors, experts, and adult learners in work life. Their needs are identified through company visits, training sessions, and needs assessments.

The audit visit confirmed this needs-based approach. Interviewees explained that company-specific training is planned with clients and lecturers, and that the university considers what companies and individuals need. The visit also showed that open university provision is used as a pathway into degree education and that open university studies follow the same rules as regular degree programmes. Interviewees described open university courses as relatively flexible and consistent across the university, while also noting competition for the same students in the Finnish continuous learning market.

The implementation of continuing education also includes several elements that support adult learners. Customised training may be ECTS-based, and it is developed through joint meetings with clients to clarify objectives and participant backgrounds. Participants may complete a pre-training survey to map their skill levels, expectations, and learning needs. Continuing education uses lectures, group exercises, practical assignments, pass/fail or 0–5 assessment, and some self-paced online courses. Taken together, these elements suggest that LUT has practical ways to adapt provision to the professional context of learners.

However, planning would benefit from clearer portfolio-level documentation. While roles, inputs, and project-level steps are described, there is no clear end-to-end view of how the continuous learning portfolio is reviewed, how often, by which criteria, and with what outputs. The approval process for portfolio-level decisions is also only partly visible. LUT would benefit from more clearly documenting the planning cycle, criteria, outputs, responsibilities, and how “national provisions” are interpreted and applied.

## Learning design and feedback practices in continuous learning are active, with room to strengthen closed-loop evidence

The audit material shows that LUT has a clear pedagogical expectation that learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment should be aligned. This is visible in the general quality management of education and in the way continuing education is described. Most continuing education modules are ECTS-based, and the common assessment method is a practical assignment, which allows participants to apply their learning to

their own work or organisation. Open university courses are implemented as part of degree programme course delivery, which means they benefit from the quality assurance practices of degree education.

The audit team also found evidence of an active feedback culture in continuous learning. The SAR states that course- and programme-specific feedback is reviewed after each training session by the responsible project team and shared with instructors. Feedback is used for immediate improvements and for planning future iterations. Informal feedback from training sessions and client interactions is also used, and development ideas are collected from instructors, companies, stakeholders, and needs assessments.

The visit provided concrete oral examples of this practice. Interviewees explained that feedback from courses and programmes is regularly discussed with lecturers. They also gave examples of feedback leading to changes, such as not using a lecturer again if feedback is weak, revising content when a programme is repeated, and using competence mapping in a company training programme for managers and directors. These examples indicate that feedback is discussed and used in practice. At the same time, LUT could document feedback-to-action more clearly, including the feedback or evaluation basis, the adjustment made, and any follow-up evidence.

Overall, LUT would benefit from making the continuous learning development cycle more visible. This could include a clearer KPI and reporting framework, better documentation of feedback-to-action, and more consistent evidence of how quality, learner needs, and outcomes are monitored beyond financial and volume indicators. This would help demonstrate not only that continuous learning is active and relevant, but also that its objectives, planning, implementation, and improvement are systematically led and followed up across all forms of continuous learning provision.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Audit visit programme

| Time                      | Interview/workshop                                                 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tuesday 14 April</b>   |                                                                    |
| 9:00–9:50                 | Interview: Rectorate                                               |
| 10:05–10:55               | Interview: Deans                                                   |
| 11:10–12:00               | Interview: Board                                                   |
| 13:00–14:50               | Student workshop                                                   |
| 13:00–13:50               | Interview: Quality system                                          |
| 14:05–14:55               | Interview: Research                                                |
| 15:10–16:00               | Interview: Support services for education                          |
| 16:15–17:00               | Interview: External stakeholders                                   |
| <b>Wednesday 15 April</b> |                                                                    |
| 9:00–9:50                 | Interview: Education management and pedagogical leadership         |
| 10:05–10:55               | Interview: Continuous learning                                     |
| 10:10–12:00               | Teacher workshop: Development of education                         |
| 11:10–12:00               | Interview: Diversity, equal opportunities and internationalisation |
| 12:15–13:00               | Interview: Student representatives                                 |
| 15:15–16:00               | Preliminary feedback                                               |

## Appendix 2. FINEEC audit criteria

Please see [Audits of Higher Education Institutions 2025-2030. Pilot phase audit manual](#) pp. 12-15 for the audit criteria.