

Audit of Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT

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.