

FINEEC's self-assessment report for the ENQA targeted review 2026

1 Introduction

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) operates within a higher education system characterised by a culture of trust, institutional autonomy, and a long-standing commitment to enhancement-led evaluation. External quality assurance in Finland is grounded in an enhancement-led approach, as defined in national legislation and reflected in FINEEC's evaluation practices. While enhancement remains at its core, elements of accountability are also an inherently part of external quality assurance and are clearly embedded in FINEEC's evaluation frameworks.

Finnish higher education institutions (HEIs) bear primary responsibility for the quality and continuous improvement of their activities. Over successive audit cycles, this responsibility has translated into strong institutional ownership of quality management and a sustained commitment to enhancing both the quality and impact of their core functions.

At the same time, the broader European higher education landscape is evolving. Across Europe, accountability-oriented approaches to quality assurance are becoming more prominent, partly driven by European Union-level initiatives. There is also an increasing demand for reliable and comparable information to support national policymaking. In parallel, structural developments, such as the growing number of higher education consortia in Finland and deeper engagement in European University Alliances, are reshaping the operating environment of HEIs and quality assurance agencies alike.

Against this background, FINEEC has developed its fourth audit cycle framework. The framework builds on the established enhancement-led approach while placing greater emphasis on systematic, data-driven, and impactful quality assurance and improvement. In addition to ensuring alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, ESG 2015, the framework has been designed in close dialogue with the Finnish higher education sector and aims to respond to its evolving needs.

FINEEC welcomes the ENQA Targeted Review at a timely moment, following the piloting phase of the fourth audit framework. The review provides an important opportunity to reflect on current practices and to further strengthen FINEEC's external quality assurance activities in line with European standards and guidelines.