

Audit of Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT

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.