

Audit of Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT

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 CO² 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.