

Abstract

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The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre has conducted an audit of the University of Lapland and has awarded the university a quality label that is valid for six years from 29 February 2016. The quality management system of University of Lapland fulfils the national criteria set for the quality management of higher education institutions, and corresponds to the European quality assurance principles and recommendations for higher education institutions.

The object of the audit was the quality management system that the university has developed based on its own needs and goals. The freely selected audit target chosen by the university was the *expertise allocation model*.

The following were regarded as key strengths of the quality management system:

- The quality system serves the needs of strategic planning, management and operations management. The use of information produced by the quality system in the strategy work, and the existence of an action plan that strengthens the link between quality management and operation management are emphasised as strengths.
- There is a culture that supports the creation of new quality management procedures through experiments and pilot programmes. Good examples are the expertise allocation model and the doctoral programme in culture-centred service design.
- Student participation as a whole is a strength of the quality system. Students are represented in all important organs. In addition, active dialogue is promoted through so-called “subject coffee meetings”, faculty- and university-level working groups, and through cooperation with subject-based student organisations.

Among others, the following recommendations were given to University of Lapland:

- The audit team recommends that the university creates structures that advance dialogue between units, and between the university and the faculties. Creation of common quality management guidelines for the faculty and unit level, based on identified good practice, would strengthen the quality culture and enhance the uniformity and effectiveness of the quality system.
- The university should ensure the appropriateness of the methods that it uses to develop the quality system and the procedures should be described in the quality manual. It would be also desirable to document the essential development measures of the system in order to avoid discontinuities, for example in a case of changes of responsibilities and roles.
- The audit team recommends that the university further defines the aims and indicators for societal impact, and clarifies and systematises the role of the societal impact development group.

Keywords

Audit, evaluation, higher education institutions, quality, quality management, quality system, university