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The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre has conducted an audit of Lapland University of Applied Sciences and awarded the institution a quality label that is valid for six years from 22 August 2017. The quality system of Lapland University of Applied Sciences fulfils the national criteria set for the quality management of higher education institutions, and the system corresponds to the European quality assurance principles and recommendations for higher education institutions.

The object of the audit was the quality system that the institution has developed based on its own needs and goals. The optional audit target chosen by the institution was *Quality management in the development of virtual campus*.

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

- Lapland University of Applied Sciences has systematic and well-established procedures in place for evaluating and developing its quality system. The procedures provide an effective tool for identifying strengths and development priorities. The responsibilities under the quality system are clearly laid out and the personnel, who are committed to the quality work, consider quality management to be part of their daily work.
- Strategy-orientation is clearly reflected in the quality system and core duties of the institution. The priorities selected for the strategy are based on the needs of the operating environment and they are clearly identified in the higher education institution and among its external stakeholders. The quality system produces relevant information for strategic management and resource planning.
- Degree education as well as research, development and innovation (RDI) have proper quality management procedures in place. The institution has created excellent procedures for strengthening and verifying the integration of RDI and teaching.

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

- Students and alumni should play a stronger role in the development of the quality system. Students should have more in-depth understanding of their role in the quality work and this could be achieved through more extensive familiarisation with the work of the institution's development teams. The dialogue between the management and the student union should also be on a more systematic and active basis.
- Impacts of the feedback should be more extensively communicated to the students. Better provision of information about the feedback processing and the resulting development measures would make students more motivated to respond to feedback questionnaires and strengthen the role of official feedback channels in the development work.
- There are slight differences in the functioning of the quality system between individual fields of study and units. Harmonisation work in these areas should continue. Good development practices should also be shared more systematically.

Keywords

Audit, evaluation, higher education institutions, quality, quality management, quality system, university of applied sciences