



FINNISH EDUCATION
EVALUATION CENTRE

AUDIT OF HÄME UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES 2016

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Finnish Education Evaluation Centre
Publications 28:2016

PUBLISHER Finnish Education Evaluation Centre

BOOK DESIGN Juha Juvonen (org.) & Sirpa Ropponen (edit)
LAYOUT Juvenes Print – Suomen Yliopistopaino Oy, Tampere

ISBN 978-952-206-363-2 (pb)
ISBN 978-952-206-364-9 (pdf)

ISSN 2342-4176 (paperback)
ISSN 2342-4184 (pdf)
ISSN-L 2342-4176

PRINTED BY Juvenes Print – Suomen Yliopistopaino Oy, Tampere 2016

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Abstract

Published by

Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC)

Name of Publication

Audit of Häme University of Applied Sciences 2016

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The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre has conducted an audit of Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK) and has awarded the institution a quality label that is valid for six years from 26 August 2016. The quality system of the institution 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 system that the institution has developed based on its own needs and goals. The freely selected audit target chosen by the institution was "HAMK Global Education Business".

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

- Quality culture is deeply embedded in HAMK's ways of working, especially in degree education.
- Staff are strongly committed to the guidelines, which ensures consistency of operations across campuses and units, including equality in the treatment of students.
- A systematic focus on student interests is central to the quality of the learning environment. The student-centred approach is the predominant paradigm rising from HAMK Strategy 2020 and implemented in the work of the teaching staff across the institution.

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

- The audit team encourages HAMK to improve staff development to support the implementation of the HAMK Strategy 2020. HAMK should also arrange more training and staff development activities for the personnel in degree programmes to support strategy-driven development.
- The audit team recommends HAMK to communicate the big picture of the quality policy and quality system to the HAMK community and beyond.
- The audit team advises HAMK to engage effectively and systematically with stakeholders in defining and enhancing their role in HAMK's quality work.

Keywords

Assessment, audit, higher education institutions, quality, quality management, quality system, university of applied sciences

Tiivistelmä

Julkaisija

Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus (Karvi)

Julkaisun nimi

Audit of Häme University of Applied Sciences 2016
(Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulun auditointi 2016)

Tekijät

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Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus on toteuttanut Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulun auditoinnin ja antanut ammattikorkeakoululle laatuleiman, joka on voimassa kuusi vuotta 26.8.2016 alkaen. Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulun laatujärjestelmä täyttää korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnalle asetetut kansalliset kriteerit ja vastaa eurooppalaisia korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnan periaatteita ja suosituksia.

Auditoinnin kohteena oli Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulun laatujärjestelmä, jonka ammattikorkeakoulu on kehittänyt omista lähtökohdistaan ja tavoitteidensa mukaisesti. Ammattikorkeakoulun valitsema vapaavalintainen auditointikohde oli ”Koulutusvienti”.

Laatujärjestelmän keskeiset vahvuudet ovat:

- Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulun laatukulttuuri on juurtunut syväälle korkeakoulun toimintatapoihin, erityisesti tutkintotavoitteiseen koulutukseen.
- Henkilöstö on vahvasti sitoutunut käyttämään ammattikorkeakoulun laatujärjestelmän sisältämiä toimintaohjeita, jotka varmistavat yhdenmukaisen toiminnan sekä opiskelijoiden tasa-arvoisen kohtelun kaikilla kampuksilla ja yksiköissä.
- HAMK Strategia 2020:een sisältyvä opiskelijakeskeisyyden periaate ohjaa systemaattisesti opetushenkilöstön työtä koko korkeakoulussa ja on oppimisympäristöjen laadun keskeinen elementti.

Ammattikorkeakoululle esitetään muun muassa seuraavia kehittämissuosituksia:

- Auditointiryhmä kannustaa Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulua lisäämään sellaista henkilöstön kehittämistoimintaa, joka tukee HAMK Strategia 2020:n jalkauttamista. Strategian toteuttamista tukevaa koulutusta ja kehittämistoimenpiteitä tulisi kohdentaa nykyistä enemmän henkilöstölle, erityisesti tutkinto-ohjelmissa.
- Auditointiryhmä suosittelee HAMKia vahvistamaan korkeakoulun sisäistä ja ulkoista viestintää laatupolitiikan ja laatujärjestelmän muodostamasta kokonaisuudesta.
- Auditointiryhmä kehottaa HAMKia osallistamaan sidosryhmiään tehokkaasti ja systemaattisesti laatutyöhön määrittelemällä ja vahvistamalla sidosryhmille selkeät roolit laatujärjestelmässä.

Avainsanat

Ammattikorkeakoulu, arviointi, auditointi, korkeakoulut, laadunhallinta, laatu, laatujärjestelmä

Sammandrag

Utgivare

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering

Publikation

Audit of Häme University of Applied Sciences 2016

(Auditering av Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulu 2016)

Författare

Carolyn Campbell, Asko Karjalainen, Lučka Lorber, Maksimas Milta, Milla Tanskanen, Kirsi Mustonen och Hilla Aurén

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering har genomfört en auditering av Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulu och beviljat yrkeshögskolan en kvalitetsstämpel som gäller i sex år från och med den 26 august 2016. Yrkeshögskolans kvalitetssystem uppfyller de nationella kriterier för kvalitetshantering som fastställts för högskolor och motsvarar de europeiska principerna för och rekommendationerna om högskolornas kvalitetshantering.

Föremålet för auditeringen var kvalitetssystemet vid Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulu som yrkeshögskolan har byggt upp utifrån sina egna utgångspunkter och mål. Yrkeshögskolans valfria auditeringsobjekt var "HAMK Global Education Business".

Enligt auditeringsgruppen är kvalitetssystemets centrala styrkor följande:

- Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulus kvalitetskultur är djupt förankrad i högskolans verksamhetssätt, särskilt i den examensinriktade utbildningen.
- Personalen har starkt förbundit sig att tillämpa de anvisningar som ingår i yrkeshögskolans kvalitetssystem och som säkerställer en enhetlig verksamhet och att studerandena bemöts jämlikt på alla campusområden och enheter.
- Principen om studerandeorientering som ingår i HAMK Strategin 2020 styr undervisningspersonalens arbete systematiskt i hela högskolan och är det centrala elementet i kvaliteten på lärandemiljöerna.

Bland annat följande rekommendationer framläggs för yrkeshögskolan:

- Auditeringsgruppen uppmuntrar Tavastlands yrkeshögskola att satsa på mer sådan personalutveckling som stöder förankringen av HAMK Strategi 2020. Utbildning och utvecklingsåtgärder som stöder implementeringen av strategin bör i större omfattning än för närvarande fokuseras på personalen, särskilt inom examensprogrammen.
- Auditeringsgruppen rekommenderar att HAMK stärker högskolans interna och externa kommunikation om den helhet som kvalitetspolicyn och kvalitetssystemet utgör.
- Auditeringsgruppen uppmanar HAMK att effektivt och systematiskt inkludera högskolans intressenter i kvalitetsarbetet genom att definiera och stärka tydliga roller för intressenterna i kvalitetssystemet.

Nyckelord

Auditering, högskolor, kvalitet, kvalitetshantering, kvalitetssystem, utvärdering, yrkeshögskola

Contents

Abstract.....	3
Tiivistelmä	5
Sammandrag.....	7
1 Audit targets and process	11
1.1 Audit targets	11
1.2 Audit process.....	12
1.3 The Finnish higher education system.....	13
2 The organisation of Häme University of Applied Sciences	15
3 The quality policy	19
3.1 Rationale, objectives and division of responsibility.....	19
3.2 Communication of the quality policy	22
3.3 Link between the quality policy and the institution's overall strategy.....	23
4 Quality system's link with strategic management	25
4.1 Information produced by the quality system for strategic management.....	25
4.2 Functioning of the quality system at different organisational levels and units	28
4.3 Quality culture.....	28
5 Development of the quality system	31
5.1 Procedures for developing the quality system.....	31
5.2 Development work after the previous audit	34
6 Quality management of the institution's core duties.....	37
6.1 Degree education	37
6.2 Samples of degree education.....	44
6.2.1 Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering.....	44
6.2.2 Master's Degree Programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship	46
6.2.3 Double Degree Programme in Design.....	49

6.3	Research, development and innovation activities as well as artistic activities.....	52
6.4	Societal impact and regional development work.....	55
7	HAMK Global Education Business.....	59
8	The quality system as a whole	65
8.1	Comprehensiveness and impact of the quality system.....	65
8.2	Quality culture.....	67
8.3	The quality system as a whole.....	67
9	Conclusions	69
9.1	Strengths and good practices of the quality system.....	69
9.2	Recommendations	70
9.3	The audit team's overall assessment	71
9.4	Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision	71
	Appendices	72
	Appendix 1. Table of audit targets and criteria.....	72
	Appendix 2. The stages and timetable of the audit process.....	78
	Appendix 3. Programme of the audit visit.....	79

1

Audit targets and process

1.1 Audit targets

The target of this audit is the quality system developed by Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK) based on its own needs and goals. The focus of the audit is on the procedures and processes that the higher education institution (HEI) uses to maintain, develop and enhance the quality of its operations. In accordance with the principle of enhancement-led evaluation, the HEI's objectives and the content or results of its activities are not evaluated in the audit. The aim of the audit is to help the HEI to identify strengths, good practices and areas in need of development in its own operations.

Audits of the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) evaluate whether the institution's quality system meets the national criteria (Appendix 1), and whether it corresponds to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area¹ (also known as the ESG). Furthermore, the audits evaluate how well the quality system meets the needs of strategic and operations management, as well as the quality management of the HEI's core duties and the extent to which it is comprehensive and effective. In addition, FINEEC's audits focus on evaluating the institution's quality policy, the development of the quality system, and how effective and dynamic the quality system is.

HAMK chose "HAMK Global Education" as its optional audit target. For the samples of degree education, it selected the Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering and the Master's Programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship. The audit team chose the Double Degree Programme in Design as the third sample of degree education.

¹ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area is available at <http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/>

The audit targets of Häme University of Applied Sciences are:

1. Quality policy
2. Quality system's link with strategic management
3. Development of the quality system
4. Quality management of the higher education institution's core duties:
 - a. Degree education
 - b. Research, development and innovation activities (RDI), as well as artistic activities
 - c. Societal impact and regional development work²
 - d. Optional audit target: HAMK Global Education
5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes
 - i. Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering
 - ii. Master's Degree Programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship
 - iii. Degree Programme chosen by the audit team: Double Degree Programme in Design
6. The quality system as a whole.

A set of criteria based on a scale of four development stages of quality management (absent, emerging, developing and advanced) is employed in the audit. The development stage of each audit target has been determined and described individually. The development stage of the optional audit target is not taken into account when evaluating whether the audit will pass.

1.2 Audit process

The audit is based on the basic material and the self-evaluation report submitted by Häme University of Applied Sciences, as well as an audit visit to the institution on 15–17 March 2016. The audit team also had access to electronic materials essential to the institution's quality management. The key phases of the audit process and the timetable are included in Appendix 2.

HAMK chose for the audit to be conducted in English by an international audit team. Prior to the appointment of the audit team, HAMK was provided the opportunity to comment on the audit team's composition, especially from the viewpoint of possible conflicts of interest.

The members of the audit team were:

Senior Consultant **Carolyn Campbell**, Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, United Kingdom (Chair of the audit team)

Director **Asko Karjalainen**, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Finland (Vice-chair)

²Including social responsibility, continuing education, open university of applied sciences education, as well as paid-services education.

Vice-Rector for Quality development **Lučka Lorber**, University of Maribor, Slovenia

Head of Communications and Marketing **Maksimilija Milta**, European Humanities University, Lithuania

Education Coordinator **Milla Tanskanen**, Finnish Dental Society Apollonia, Finland

FINEEC staff members:

Senior Advisor **Kirsi Mustonen** acted as the project manager

Evaluation Expert **Hilla Aurén** as backup for the project manager.

As mentioned, the audit team conducted a three-day audit visit to Häme University of Applied Sciences in March 2016. The purpose of the visit was to verify and supplement the observations made on the HEI's quality system based on the audit material. The programme of the audit visit is included as Appendix 3. The audit team wrote this report based on an analysis of the material accumulated during the evaluation. The audit report was written collaboratively by the audit team members, drawing on each team member's expertise. HAMK had the opportunity to fact-check the report prior to the meeting of the Higher Education Evaluation Committee (26 August 2016) where the audit decision was made.

1.3 The Finnish higher education system

The Finnish higher education system is comprised of universities and universities of applied sciences (UASs). All universities engage in both education and scientific research and have the right to award doctorate degrees. Universities of applied sciences, on the other hand, are multi-field, professionally orientated higher education institutions. They engage in applied research and development which support education and regional development. The Finnish UAS system was established in the early 1990s.

Higher education institutions operate under the governance and steering of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) and receive most of their funding from the Ministry. The activities of HEIs are steered in practice by four-year performance agreements with the MoEC. The only exceptions are the National Defence University, which operates under the Ministry of Defence, the Police University College under the Ministry of the Interior, and Åland University of Applied Sciences under the local government of Åland.

Finland has not yet adopted a national qualifications framework (NQF). However, the Government Decree on University Degrees (2004) and the Government Decree on Polytechnics (2014) define the objectives, extent and overall structure of degrees. HEIs select their own students, but national regulations stipulate some general principles for student admission such as the equal treatment of applicants.

The educational responsibilities of the UASs are stipulated in their operating licenses. While universities of applied sciences provide both Bachelor's and Master's degrees, the focus of their educational provision is on Bachelor's degrees. A UAS Bachelor's degree consists of either 180, 210, 240 or 270 ECTS credits (equivalent to 3–4 years of full-time study), depending on the study field. It comprises of basic and professional studies, elective studies, a practical training period and a Bachelor's thesis or final project.

A Master's degree from a UAS consists of 60 to 90 ECTS credits (1–1,5 years of full-time study). Applicants are eligible to apply for a UAS Master's degree programme if they hold a relevant Bachelor's degree and at least three years of relevant work experience or artistic experience. The UAS Master's degree comprises advanced professional studies, elective studies and a final thesis or final project. Universities of applied sciences also provide vocational teacher education, leading to a teacher qualification. UAS teacher education is aimed for those who already have a higher education degree in a relevant field.

UASs decide on the detailed content and structure of the degrees they award. They also decide on their curricula and forms of instruction. Some fields, such as midwife education have additional regulations for the structure and/or content of the degrees awarded. UASs also actively cooperate on curricular issues under the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences.

The organisation of Häme University of Applied Sciences

Häme University of Applied Sciences started its operation in 1991 with a temporary university of applied sciences license and has operated on a permanent license since 1995. At the time of its establishment, HAMK was comprised of eight individual institutions: the Evo Forest School, the Horticulture School at Lepaa, the Mustiala Agricultural Institute, the Handicraft and Art School of Wetterhoff, and the Technical Institutes of Forssa, Hämeenlinna, Riihimäki and Valkeakoski. HAMK is the only higher education institution in the region of Häme, located in Southern Finland.

Häme University of Applied Sciences Ltd started operations on January 1st 2015, and the Häme Municipal Federation of Professional Higher Education ceased to operate on that date. This change was the result of a 2009 amendment to the Polytechnics Act, which specifies that universities of applied sciences (formerly known as polytechnics) may be operated only by limited companies. The current (2015) organisation of HAMK is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Häme University of Applied Sciences Ltd is owned by the municipalities in its area of operation: Hämeenlinna, Riihimäki, Valkeakoski, Forssa, Hattula and Tammela. The term of the limited company's Board is four years. Responsibility for the operational management rests with the CEO and Rector.

Education in HAMK is organised around Schools defined by the content areas:

- The School of Bioeconomy
- The School of Wellbeing
- The School of Technology
- The School of Entrepreneurship and Business
- The School of Professional Teacher Education.

Education is offered on seven campuses: Evo, Forssa, Hämeenlinna, Lepaa, Mustiala, Riihimäki and Valkeakoski.

Four research units owned by the Schools also operate in HAMK. Their task is to engage in customer-orientated research and promote regional impact. The research units and their focus areas are:

- **The Research Unit for Professional Excellence** studies and develops learning solutions for vocational competence, as well as competence management and leadership from the perspective of business, industry and educational organisations.
- **The Research Unit for Bioeconomy** seeks to strengthen research related to multidisciplinary bioeconomy and the sustainable use of natural resources at HAMK.
- **The Sheet Metal Centre** conducts research and product development related to sheet metal products and structures together with industry and other research institutes.
- **The Research Unit for Smart Services** focuses on the utilisation of digitalisation and the development of services from the perspective of daily life, wellbeing, business and industry.

The research units participate in research projects with HAMK's strategic international partners, Feevale University in Brazil and VIA University College in Denmark. HAMK is also part of the Federation of Universities of Applied Sciences (FUAS).³

At the time of the audit, HAMK offered 18 Bachelor's degree programmes in Finnish and four in English, six Master's programmes in Finnish and one in English. As shown in Table 1, the number of staff at HAMK was 591 person-years in 2014. The total (full-time equivalent) number of students was 5 770 in 2014, including Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, as well as professional teacher education.

³FUAS is a strategic alliance formed by Häme University of Applied Sciences, Lahti University of Applied Sciences and Laurea University of Applied Sciences in 2008.

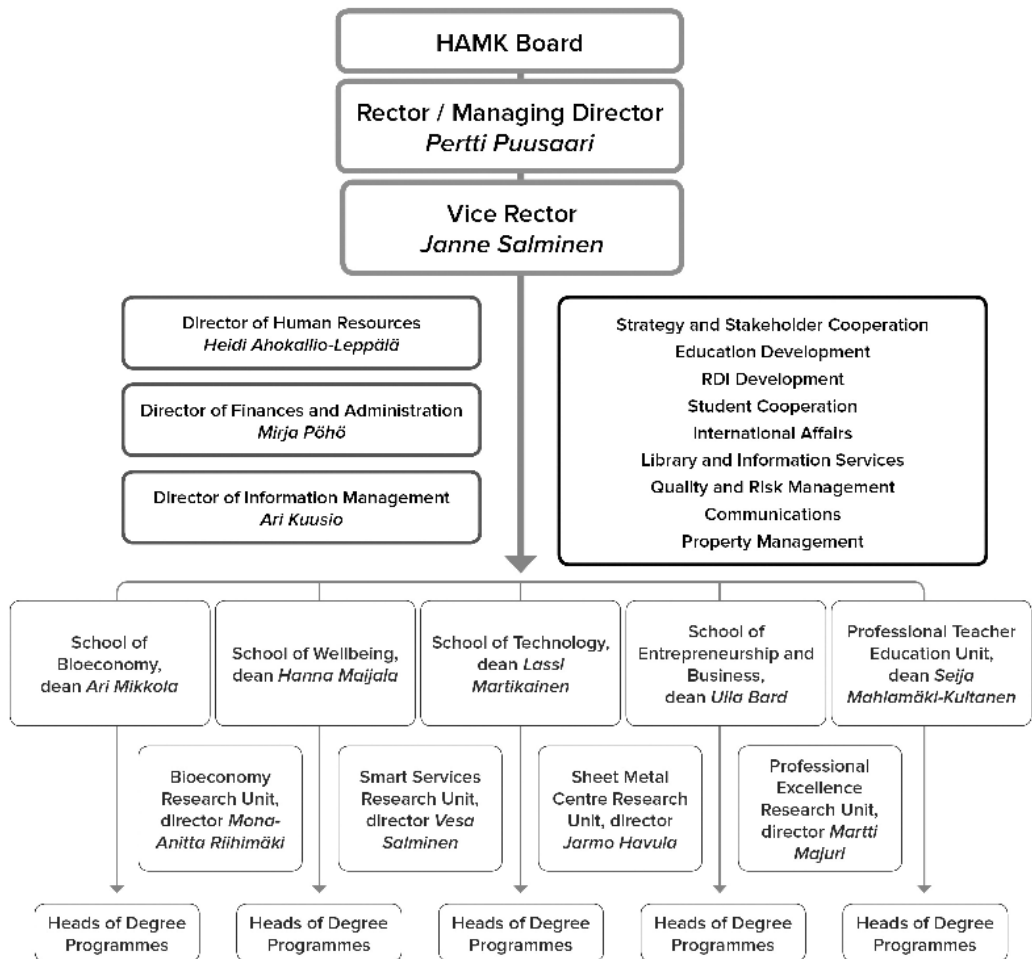


FIGURE 1. The organisation of Häme University of Applied Sciences in 2015, as depicted in the self-evaluation report.

TABLE 1. Key figures of HAMK in 2014: the number of students and staff. Sources: HAMK's basic material and the MoEC database Vipunen.

Students (full-time equivalent, 2014)	
Bachelor's degree	5 069
Master's degree	291
Professional teacher education	410
Degrees awarded (annual average 2012–2014)	
Bachelor's degree	990
Master's degree	100
Staff (full-time equivalent, 2014)	
Teaching staff	259,9
RDI services staff	47,6
Other staff	283,5

The quality policy

The quality policy of Häme University of Applied Sciences is clearly linked to HAMK Strategy 2020. The rationale, objectives and division of responsibilities of HAMK's quality policy are explicitly defined and are the result of a thorough and wide development process. The quality policy is accessible to the internal and external stakeholders, although there is scope for enhancing the awareness of external stakeholders. The staff as well as students have access to the quality system documentation in digital format on HAMK's Intranet. However, communicating the big picture of HAMK's quality system and links to Strategy 2020 effectively to the whole HAMK community poses a challenge.

*The quality policy of Häme University of Applied Sciences is at a **developing** stage.*

3.1 Rationale, objectives and division of responsibility

The goals and basic principles of the quality system of Häme University of Applied Sciences are described in the Quality guideline. HAMK's quality system – illustrated in Figure 2 – is an entity comprising processes, procedures and systems that support quality management. The description of the quality system includes an overview of quality management and detailed guidance concerning processes including guidelines and instructions, evaluation procedures and workbooks. The system is subject to continuous improvement and encompasses all operations and organisational levels. Staff as well as students have access to the quality system documentation in digital format on HAMK's Intranet. The audit team noted from the interviews that the most important documentation is used regularly.

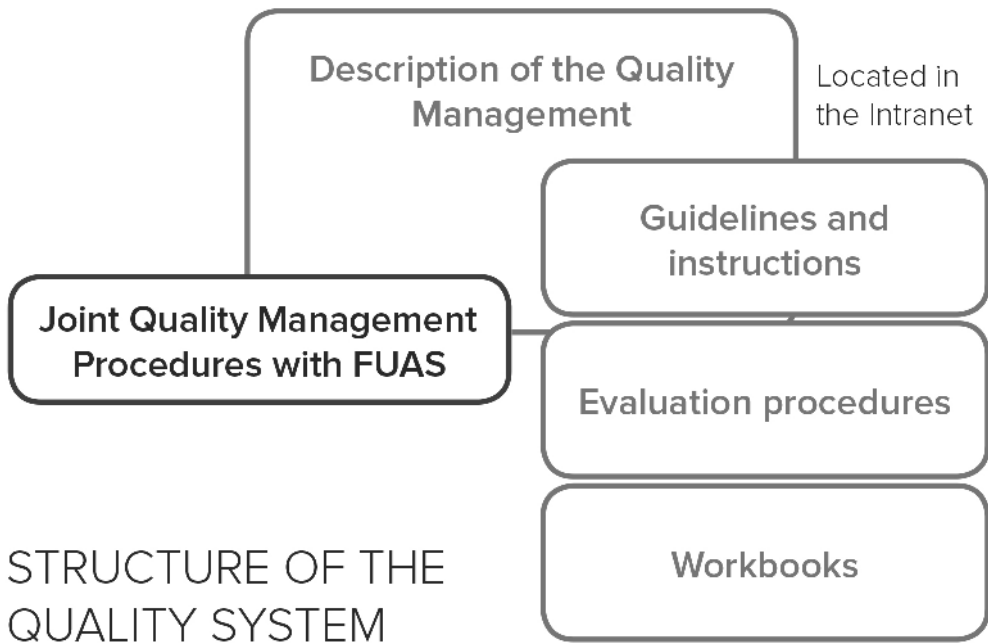


FIGURE 2. Structure of HAMK’s quality system, as illustrated in the self-evaluation report.

The audit team determined that the rationale of the HAMK quality system is clearly defined. The main aim of the quality system is to support strategy implementation by ensuring continuous and goal-orientated development and renewal of the operations. HAMK states in the audit material that the quality system harmonises its operations to ensure that they are influential, ethical and in line with the principles of sustainable development. Through its own quality system, HAMK observes the joint quality management procedures agreed by the member institutions of FUAS. Documentation verifying the progress of implementing Strategy 2020 is found in the Stara system, which is a strategic tool for goal-setting and measuring development at the organisational level.

PDCA cycle is widely known by staff

HAMK’s operations and operational management are based on the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle. This basic quality management model guides HAMK towards gradual, controlled and systematic development. Figure 3 shows HAMK’s various activities subsumed under each phase of the cycle. All operations, from strategy work to individual work assignments, include the phases of planning, implementing, evaluating and developing. HAMK has established quality management procedures for use in the practical implementation of the PDCA cycle. During the audit interviews the audit team asked staff to describe the quality system at HAMK in their own drawings. One thing the drawings had in common was that everyone identified the PDCA cycle from the perspective of their own duties. The audit team noted that among the staff there was however a problem in understanding and describing the big picture of HAMK’s quality system and

its links to strategy. The audit material presented several different figures explaining the quality system and its elements. Simplifying them – or even producing one combined figure of the entire quality system – would likely help improve the understanding of and communicating about the quality system as a whole. This is an issue to consider especially with the staff.

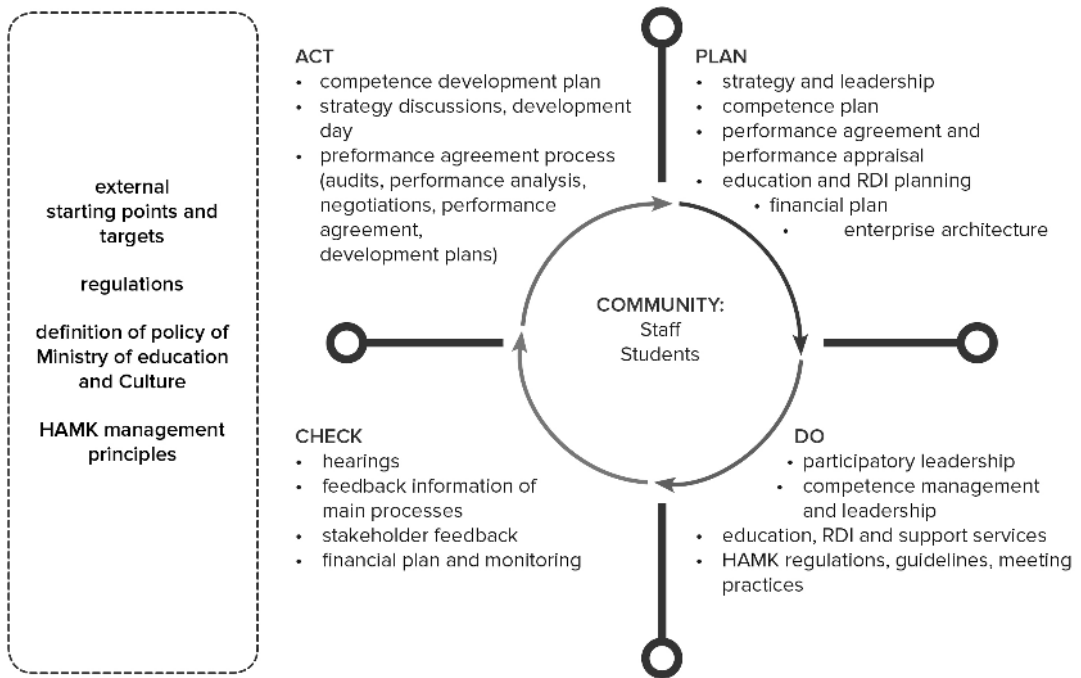


FIGURE 3. The PDCA cycle at HAMK, as depicted in the self-evaluation report.

In the background of all its operations are external parameters and goals set by society, customers and beneficiaries, as well as information on HAMK’s own operations that guide the development efforts. A good practice identified at HAMK and mentioned in many interviews is the Business Intelligence tool, which combines several organisational functions such as business process development, quality control, centralised data integration, advanced identity intelligence and process automation. The audit team encourages HAMK to develop this tool on the basis of feedback given by the users.

The highest decision-making authority at HAMK is the Board, the members of which represent the owners, employers, students and staff. The Rector oversees the operations of HAMK and is responsible for the quality system, supported by the Board of Directors as well as the Quality and Risk Management Steering Group. The latter is chaired by the Vice-Rector, who supervises the development of quality management according to the strategy. The group consists of the unit directors, the Head of Strategy, the Risk Manager, a representative appointed by the Student Union

HAMKO and representatives from the RDI and education processes. The quality management planner serves as the Group's secretary. The Executive Director of FUAS regularly takes part in the group's meetings, serving as a link between quality work in HAMK and FUAS quality management. The audit visit interviews revealed that the Steering Group has been a useful forum to coordinate and handle HAMK level quality and risk management subjects.

The division of responsibilities for quality policy is clear – especially in degree education

According to HAMK Strategy 2020, quality work is performed at every level and in every operational area of HAMK. The division of responsibilities for the quality policy is defined in a clear manner, especially in relation to the core function of education. The audit team noted however from the organigram in the audit material that the firm links in terms of relationships and responsibilities in degree education were not replicated, at least in visual form, in the same way for other core areas and new activities. The quality policy shows the quality system's objectives and responsibilities, links to the institution's overall strategy and the vision of HAMK's management. The responsibility for quality management of units and functions rests with its director or supervisor. Quality management support and contact persons are appointed for each unit. Students are responsible for their learning and, as mentioned, elect a representative to the Quality and Risk Management Steering Group, as well as representatives to other development groups. From interviews with domestic and international students, the audit team found that students are satisfied with the quality culture at HAMK, especially in degree education. However, the audit team suggests that students should be supported in taking a more prominent role in the institution's quality work.

HAMK's quality system and the quality management tool kit form a functioning entity operating especially well in the major core business of the institution – education. Information is provided by the quality system's performance indicators, addressing the indicators of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The quality system is integrated in all of HAMK's activities. The procedures for developing the quality system are distinctly defined and are under continuous development (see Chapter 5 for further elaboration).

3.2 Communication of the quality policy

The quality policy is an integral part of HAMK's overall Strategy. HAMK provides a concrete description of its quality management and the quality system as a whole, which includes a resource planning system, targets, different groups, and also follow-up of implementation. The guidelines on the Intranet provide detailed instructions for selected processes with the aim of harmonising internal practices and guaranteeing a level of consistency throughout the whole UAS. The aim of the feedback and evaluation information is to make the results of operations and qualitative information visible. Other databases facilitate the tracking of document development efforts and work performed.

The quality policy is accessible and communicated to all staff members and the management of departments for instance through staff development, seminars and regular weekly meetings. The Intranet provides access to documentation on HAMK's quality system, including guidelines, evaluation and feedback survey reports, indicators and other performance data. Since the previous audit more attention has been given to feedback from students.

The audit team noted from the interviews that the electronic workspaces on the Intranet and the Yammer tool are actively used in HAMK's daily work. Information produced by the indicators is also reported to different external partners and presented to the Board of the Limited Company. The Rector's environment reviews presented at every Board meeting, the annual Rector's hearings for staff and students and the Rector's quarterly meetings with HAMK's Student Union HAMKO exemplify good practices in maintaining coherent communication between various interest groups of the HAMK community and reinforcing the advanced quality culture of the institution. According to the self-evaluation report, communication about quality management and quality policy is also one form of FUAS cooperation.

Also according to the self-evaluation report, material on quality which is published on the external website is mainly intended for stakeholders interested in quality issues, including partners and businesses as well as industry customers. The audit team suggests that HAMK would consider additional channels for communicating the quality policy to external stakeholders effectively.

3.3 Link between the quality policy and the institution's overall strategy

The HAMK Strategy 2020 was adopted by the Board of the Häme Municipality Federation of Professional Higher Education on 30 September 2013 and updated to its current form in October 2015. The strategic aims have strong links with education, applied research and internationalisation. The quality system had signalled a need for reform and as a result, the process of reform for the HAMK Strategy 2020 was implemented. The strategy reform process has also influenced development of the quality system and this has resulted in more simplified and concise guidelines.

HAMK is the only higher education institution in the region of Häme and has strategic goals involving systematic competence development of students, internationalisation, advanced utilisation of digital tools and versatile cooperation with employers. HAMK is also faced with increasing and diversifying employer expectations at a time when public funding for higher education is subject to significant cuts. While the HAMK quality system covers all essential operations, the information on results and the communication of results to external stakeholders is not as efficient as it should be. The audit team recommends that HAMK ensures that the employers know and understand the link between its strategy and quality system.

The audit team was impressed by the commitment demonstrated by staff at all levels to the quality policy and the PDCA cycle in influencing their ways of working and delivering a sustained quality culture at HAMK.

Quality system's link with strategic management

Information produced by the HAMK quality system and its Business Intelligence tool serve the needs of the strategic management. Despite HAMK's fragmentation across seven campuses and a number of Schools, there is proof of the quality system's success, with guidelines and a working culture based on continuous improvement as its safeguards. The staff's strong commitment to the guidelines ensures consistency in the operations across the campuses, units and Schools, including equality in the treatment of students. The established guidelines, supplemented by IT systems and tools, also ensure constant communication within HAMK and beyond. However, engaging with a wider range of external stakeholders at top and mid-level management would strengthen the link between the quality system and strategic management, and contribute to a clearer articulation of the outcomes of the quality system and risk management.

*The quality system's link with strategic management is at a **developing** stage.*

4.1 Information produced by the quality system for strategic management

According to HAMK Strategy 2020, "The key to our success is ensuring that we can achieve our strategic goals through systematic competence development, internationalisation, advanced utilisation of digital tools as well as versatile cooperation with employers." For this purpose, the operational management of HAMK is led in a systematic way. The goal-orientated operating method was confirmed through studying existing regulations, evidence of which was seen during the audit visit.

Business Intelligence and Stara produce useful information for management needs

Digitalisation has become one of the driving forces of the link between collecting data and utilising it in HAMK's strategic management. There is compelling proof of HAMK's Business Intelligence producing substantial information for the development of the UAS core activities: education,

customer-orientated applied research and regional cooperation. In addition to its applications to education at HAMK, in applied research the quality system is seen as a toolkit for consistently implementing the Strategy 2020.

Business Intelligence is also instrumental for setting indicators for the larger, strategic management of the UAS. As a part of HAMK's business intelligence environment, the human resources development system Stara translates UAS strategy into targets for the units and staff. Hence Stara provides real-time information for the everyday management needs as well as a platform for assessing the work of the staff and supervisors. In 2017, HAMK is planning to add a competence measurement tool to the Stara system. It will provide information on the extent to which the staff have the competencies required to deliver the goals of Strategy 2020.

In an environment of rapidly changing economic and operational realities such as budget cuts and the introduction of tuition fees for international students, the Rector's "environment reviews" delivered regularly at the Board meetings are commended by the audit team. Their importance is greater considering the risks presented by the misinterpretation of data, which the top management recognised as a possibility in the interviews. The interviewees confirmed that HAMK has put great efforts into ensuring that data is entered correctly to the systems and to verify the applied measures.

At the level of strategic management, the need for in-depth marketing for and of HAMK was identified both by HAMK's external partners and in terms of HAMK's global ambitions. In *HAMK Strategy 2020 Through Actions* (2013) the goal of the institution is to "disseminate our expertise globally and also into the fields of education and research." Given the goal-orientated manner of the research units' operative expansion, as highlighted in the Primary Aspects of HAMK's Strategy 2020, there is a need to define the right indicators for added value measurement of the applied research operations to strategic operations.

Internal communication about quality issues takes place regularly and systematically

According to both the management and staff of HAMK, the guidelines and quality routine are equally seen as safeguards of the quality system's consistency. In this respect, the annual Rector's hearings for staff and students is a concrete example of internal quality communication, supplemented by feedback sessions at all levels of HAMK. Examples presented in the interviews included the monthly feedback sessions for Master's students in the 18–100 study model (more information about the new study models can be found in Chapter 6), frequent face-to-face discussions with external partners regarding the level of degree programmes, development seminars for staff, and a conversational culture that is instrumental for identifying the demands and support needs for the staff's skills. Another good example of internal communication is the inclusion of representatives from all HAMK Schools in the Global Education Business Team, which helps maintain up-to-date communication on matters of strategic priority.

The culture of monthly feedback meetings is also present within the Support Services. For example, the ICT management team meets once a month to discuss topics related to quality work, therefore maintaining internal communication and providing the information needed for strategic decision-making. In addition, the instant helpdesk system serves as a useful tool for the consistent operation of all HAMK's units, ensuring swift responses to rising issues.

Communication to external stakeholders could be more proactive

Despite the general communication of HAMK's strategy to external stakeholders and joint press conferences with some external partners, the audit team advises HAMK to prioritise proactive communication of the good practices at HAMK to external partners, hence expanding the scope of potential operations and network of partners. The external partners demonstrated vivid interest in HAMK as a reliable partner and supplier of products and services. The institution's recent transformations, such as the reformed study model, could additionally be supported by external partners, given more prominent external communication of HAMK's operations.

In addition, although HAMK has taken very positive steps since 2011 in reducing the number of guidelines, strategic operations may find a need for lightening the administrative workload within the overcomplicated process arrangements of the quality system illustrated in Figure 4. According to the Deans, digitalisation would be instrumental in lightening the staff's burden of filling in forms, collecting feedback and working with the internal quality management system.

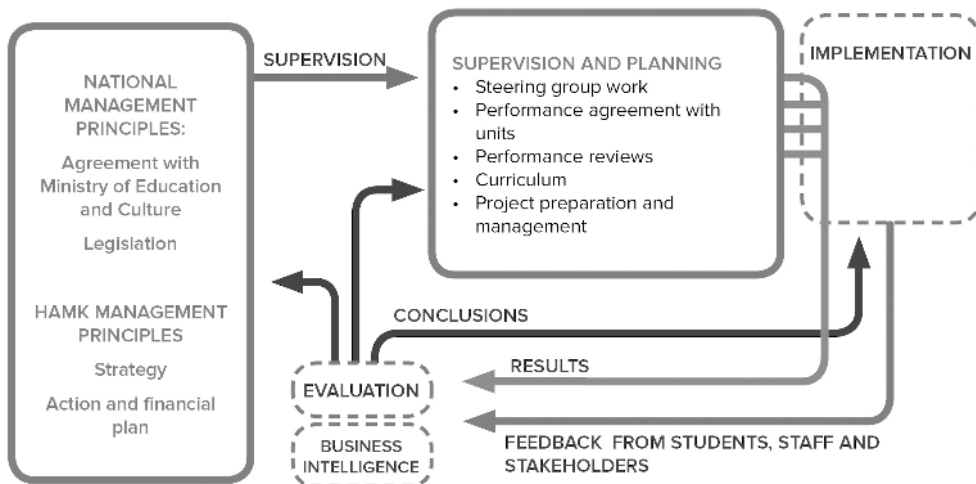


FIGURE 4. The operational management at HAMK, as depicted in the self-evaluation report.

4.2 Functioning of the quality system at different organisational levels and units

Given the fragmentation of HAMK's institutional arrangement, maintaining the function of the quality system evenly across all units stands out as a constant challenge.

During the audit visit, the audit team found compelling evidence of the implementation of the guidelines and an attitude of continuous improvement among the staff, serving as safeguards of consistency of operations across all HAMK units, including the seven campuses. Digitalisation was recognised as a tool for maintaining harmonious progress throughout the system. A good practice recognised by the audit team were the unannounced, surprise visits by top management and Board members to various units and campuses of HAMK, which provide the opportunity for direct contact with staff and students and fact-checking to serve the needs of strategic management. This was seen as an especially useful custom at a time of implementing a new Strategy 2020 and simultaneously launching a teaching system reform.

According to HAMK Strategy 2020, "Keeping students central is our principle in everything we do." The audit visit provided proof that the student-centred approach is the predominant paradigm in the work of teaching staff across different units at HAMK. This unifying approach helps maintain consistent approaches to teaching and learning across the institution. For example, students in the 8–16 study model saw the student-centred approach implemented in the independent planning of their studies, and as the opportunity to choose their own projects; similarly students from the 18–100 study model agreed that students are at the centre of the learning process. Furthermore, at HAMK's management level, student learning outcomes are interpreted as indicators of the quality system's added value across all units, according to the Quality and Risk Management Steering Group. This demonstrates an additional safeguard to the equal treatment of students across the units through the long-standing, solid, guidelines-based quality system.

4.3 Quality culture

From HAMK's documentation and interviews, the audit team noted that a strong quality culture is deeply embedded in HAMK's ways of working, especially in degree education, which is primarily based on a collaborative commitment of HAMK staff and a working culture of continuous improvement and goal-orientation. Quality culture is an organic part of the staff's daily work and the methods of teaching delivered at HAMK, hence ensuring quality culture's presence at both strategic and grassroots levels. Given the context of HAMK Strategy 2020, further development of the institution's quality culture would benefit from introducing a wider distribution of responsibilities of external partners in strengthening HAMK's quality work.

The audit team was disappointed to discover that the process of writing the self-evaluation report "mainly involved personnel representatives" and according to interviews with the top management, the self-evaluation process did not reveal any new information to HAMK regarding the work of

their quality system. In the audit team's view HAMK would have benefited from engaging the wider UAS community in the preparatory work of the self-evaluation, including students, alumni, stakeholders and external partners.

Students and external stakeholders could be more involved in quality work

In addition, a deeper involvement of the UAS community in HAMK's quality work could benefit from introducing students and student representatives to roles beyond being members of boards and steering groups towards the implementation stage of quality work. HAMK's external stakeholder interviews indicated a need for more profound engagement in the quality work. The stakeholders' willingness to be engaged with the top and mid-level management at HAMK was raised during the audit visit and demonstrates further potential for quality culture's growth, whereas HAMK's coordination of the stakeholder and partner platform for mutual cooperation would provide added value for the synergy between both communities of HAMK, stakeholders and the external partners.

During the site visit there was no evidence provided that the Quality and Risk Management Steering Group does in fact operate as a strategic body fostering the enhancement of quality culture at decision-making level. Clarifying the Steering Group's role and its relevance within the entire HAMK quality system's environment would support the links between quality system operations and risk management, including demands for the forecasts of the latter.

HAMK's guidelines are central in ensuring a variety of measures supporting quality culture development and consistency across all units of the UAS. They are instrumental in ensuring equal treatment of all students. The teaching staff's commitment to the fulfilment of quality work is demonstrated in the advancement of the student-centred learning paradigm through problem-solving, team-work and other methods as well as readiness also to receive negative feedback from students. Monthly quality discussions between each School's teaching staff and HAMK's rapid response to student feedback on the teaching process also demonstrate an additional good practice to existing measures and tools of quality culture.

Lastly, the Rector's quarterly meetings with HAMK's Student Union HAMKO exemplify another good practice of maintaining coherent communication between various interest groups of the HAMK community, strengthening the advanced quality culture of the institution.

The senior management's greater attention to introducing additional tools and methods for staff support in the implementation of Strategy 2020 would benefit the quality culture and development, especially given the context of simultaneous reforms and adjustments. The overall development of the quality culture should consider enhancing the accessibility of infrastructure and Support Services across all HAMK Schools and campuses to all students (including international students), bearing in mind the logistical matters of distant campuses, highlighted in the student interviews. Finally, given HAMK's internationalisation ambitions, the improvement of the teaching staff's language competencies would also further enhance the learning environment.

Development of the quality system

Häme University of Applied Sciences has well-functioning procedures for evaluating and developing the quality system. The development of the quality system after the first audit in 2011 has been systematic, with several issues fully addressed and others still a work in progress. HAMK is able to identify the system's strengths and areas in need of development, but needs to give further attention to the workload created by quality management. In the context of both internal and external changes in HAMK's operational arena, the audit team encourages HAMK to continue the reflective self-evaluation of the quality system and recommends communicating the "big picture" of development work effectively to the HAMK community at all times.

*The development of the quality system is at a **developing** stage.*

5.1 Procedures for developing the quality system

The previous audit organised by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) in 2011 noted that HAMK's quality assurance system at the time covered all essential operations. The quality system as a whole was at an advanced level. However, the previous audit team noted in the final report that "the challenge is to keep the quality system sufficiently compact and comprehensive in operation."

The quality system of HAMK is under continuous and systematic development. Figure 5 illustrates the development process of the HAMK quality system for the years 1996–2018. It includes regularly conducted self-evaluations (as well as targeted self-evaluations), workplace evaluations, development measures, FUAS level cross-evaluations, a FUAS preliminary audit and regular FIN(H)EEC audits of the quality system conducted every six years. The purpose of the development process is to keep the system up-to-date and ensure that its scope, structure and content make it an effective part of the operational management.

Institutional oversight of the functioning of the quality system could be strengthened by a self-evaluation process engaging a wider range of actors from the community with effective follow-up to ensure delivery of Strategy 2020.

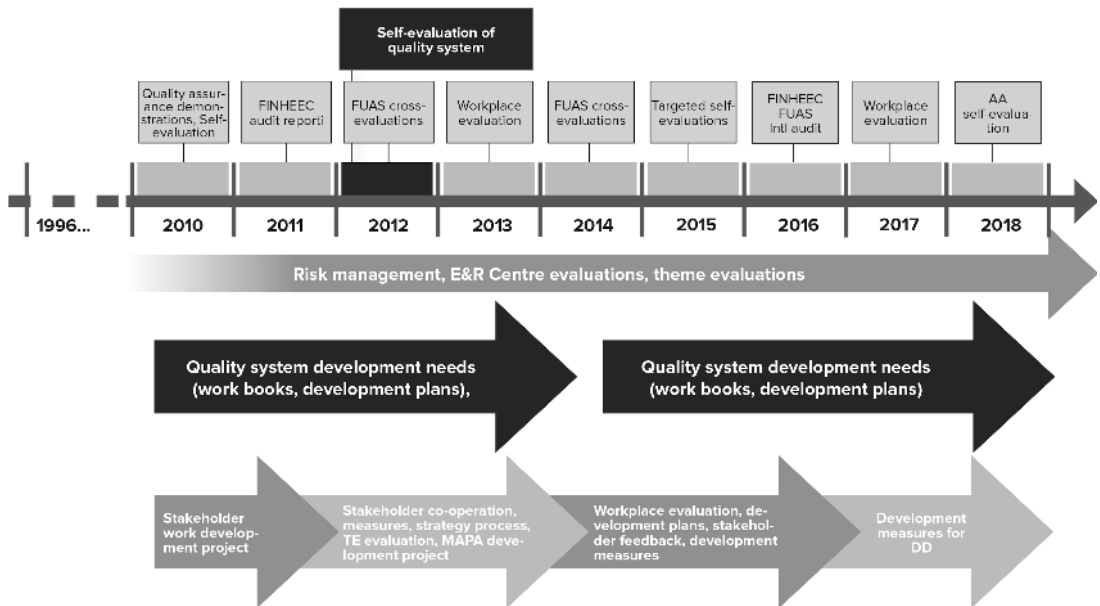


FIGURE 5. Development of the quality system, from HAMK's Basic Material.

Multiple well-functioning procedures in place for evaluating and developing the quality system

In the self-evaluation report, HAMK described its well-functioning procedures, which are in place to evaluate and develop the quality system. The Quality and Risk Management Steering Group meets once a month as a forum of discussion for strategic and operational management on issues related to quality management, both at the institutional level and in individual units. The memos from the Group's meetings are available on the Intranet. According to the interviewees, the risk management function supports the critical development of the quality system and brings a new perspective to the Group's activities. As a result, the need to ensure that operations are goal-orientated has also been highlighted.

Development methods also include participatory strategy work based on performance, feedback and evaluation information and the systematic renewal of the quality system and the guidelines as a result.

According to the self-evaluation report, HAMK has engaged in consistent cooperation with the other members of FUAS in order to develop the quality management. This cooperation has enriched HAMK's quality activities and operational management, especially through international activities.

One example is the preliminary audit of FUAS conducted in spring 2015 in collaboration with KU Leuven Association. An international team carried out the preliminary audit following the FINEEC audit model. During FINEEC's 2016 audit visit, the audit team asked what kind of actions followed from the preliminary audit. One outcome was a shared area of development revealed across FUAS; how to make the students' role in the quality system visible. The development work in this area will ensue at the individual institution level (HAMK, LAMK, LAUREA) with a focus on the "Check" phase of the PDCA cycle.

In addition, cross-evaluations have been conducted at the FUAS level in 2012 and 2014. The audit interviewees mentioned that the main aim of these evaluations is to produce added value to FUAS members.

The top management of HAMK stated in an interview that the results from FINEEC and FUAS audits serve as an essential basis for further developing the quality system as a whole. Minor revisions to the system are made based on continuous internal follow-up. The most important revisions comprise updates of the guidelines, which is done based on needs and feedback. According to the self-evaluation report, the quality system development work forms a logical temporal continuum in which issues encountered in operations are examined in accordance with the PDCA cycle model.

Procedures for improving the quality system are systematic and effective

When eight different educational institutions merged to form Häme University of Applied Sciences in 1992, building a quality system was selected as a key element for harmonising their activities. The basis of HAMK's quality system was created in a dedicated development project from 1993–1995, the interviewees informed the audit team.

At the time of the current audit, HAMK has a well-functioning quality system that is the result of long-term development and covers all organisation levels, although the audit team observed that some new activities and focus areas in Strategy 2020 present challenges to the current system.

The quality system of HAMK has established systematic procedures for producing adequate information to suit the needs of operational management. This information is communicated to different staff groups, students and external stakeholders, although not always consistently in the last case. Since 1995, quality system procedures have been developed to ensure that they support uniform management practices. This has also improved the efficiency of the quality system, as the recent work to develop indicators shows. The entire HAMK community is committed to the continuous improvement of the quality system's operation.

According to the self-evaluation report, in 2012 the quality system produced distinct signals that a strategy update was called for. Strategy development sparked a need to reform the organisation structure and to develop new forms of delivering education. The previous top-down strategic and process management style has been increasingly replaced by multidirectional interaction structured around teams, which necessitated changes also in the institution's information systems.

5.2 Development work after the previous audit

The HAMK quality system has well-established and systematic procedures for evaluating and developing the quality system's elements regularly. The audit team confirms that HAMK has noticeably taken into consideration the main development recommendations proposed by the previous audit team in 2011.

Digitalisation of the quality work began in the 2000s: HAMK's website was set up, and the Quality guideline was shared online, accessible to everyone. After the first audit, HAMK has improved the functionality and procedures (Guidelines) of the quality system and special attention has been given to internal communication. In 2014–2015, the institution's digital content was transferred to SharePoint and a more versatile HAMK Intranet was introduced, enabling more interactive operation and activities in an electronic work environment. In terms of quality management, this has opened up the possibility of using social media tools (in particular Yammer) for interactive discussions and dissemination of information on topical issues of quality work. The process has allowed HAMK to move some of the quality management work to electronic workspaces, making it more mobile and location independent.

Based on the feedback from the FINHEEC audit in 2011, the audit team noticed that HAMK has responded to the following recommendations and has undertaken a number of improvement measures recorded in the self-evaluation report and confirmed by the audit visit interviews:

- Stronger links between risk management and the quality system have been established. To promote this, a common Quality and Risk Management Steering Group was established. Where appropriate, documents accumulated through quality work have been utilised in risk management, and risk management aspects have been incorporated in internal surveys and evaluations.
- The guideline system has been clarified, and guidelines are organised logically on the quality pages of the Intranet. The instructions for preparing guidelines were reviewed, and the guideline updating process was made more flexible. However, the interviewees mentioned that even though HAMK has reduced the number of guidelines from 65 to 40, the guideline system is still heavy. "Guidelines are mostly related to processes which have to do with student equality", one interviewee from the top management summarized. The audit team encourages HAMK to continue to pay attention to the clarity and updating of the guidelines.
- Performance indicators have been developed further, and funding model indicators are comprehensibly described. They are regularly monitored at top management meetings. Online reports produced by HAMK's Business Intelligence information centre are utilised. The development of the strategic tool Stara (for setting goals and measuring development at the organisational level) is underway.
- Communication about the results of student feedback and subsequent action has been improved. The processing of student feedback has been made visible: both the feedback and actions that have resulted from the feedback are shared on the Intranet. The student union chairperson has been a member of HAMK's Board of Directors since 2013.
- A competence-based focus is more distinctly noticeable in the curricula. Quality management procedures are being updated to support this.

- The collection of feedback from stakeholders and partners in business and industry has become more organised and consistent. Cooperation with local government representatives and providers of upper secondary education in the region has also become more organised, and partnership agreements have been concluded. The HAMK Advisory Board was established in autumn 2015. Even though there has been improvement in this area since the first FINHEEC audit, stakeholder representatives in particular should be more effectively integrated to the development processes at HAMK.

HAMK's quality system has been developed consistently, but at the cost of a heavy workload

In summary, the audit team notes that HAMK has developed the quality system with consistency since the 1990s. A distinctive path of progress can be traced for the continuous development of the quality system, in line with operational changes and needs rising from the external challenges and society at large, including the MoEC's performance indicators. The top management and the staff are firmly committed to quality work, and students are also involved, although there is still scope for deeper engagement. There is awareness and understanding of how the quality system works and what its meaning and importance are at HAMK. From the interviews during the audit visit, the audit team noticed that the internal actors are widely familiar with the core elements of the quality system via the PDCA cycle and the guidelines, from the viewpoint of their own work. One strength HAMK has is that the staff have extensive influence on quality development, which keeps the quality work practical and relevant to them.

HAMK has recently reformed its degree education system. The quality system with the PDCA cycle supports the development of the new module structure and the new study models (8–16, 24–7, 18–100). HAMK encourages its staff to promote pedagogical innovation in student-centred learning environments. Regarding the workload produced by the quality system, the audit team observed that while teachers were fully involved in planning and delivering the module-based system, they do not have enough time for regional development work, especially keeping up relationships with companies. This was the case even though deepening and widening cooperation with stakeholders was one of the recommendations of the previous audit. Special attention should be given to the management of the workload from this viewpoint.

In the self-evaluation report, HAMK identified the following as the quality system's strengths: continuous development work; established and systematic procedures, guidelines and development workbooks; combining risk management with quality management; strong participation of different actors in development work and courage to test innovative quality methods. The audit team agrees that these are HAMK's strengths. The audit team also agrees with HAMK's assessment of its areas in need of development, which include the quality system's ability to meet the demands of updated operations, the visual design/readability of the guidelines and further efforts to make the update process less cumbersome. The audit team also suggest that in addition to work on the guidelines, HAMK should consider reviewing the number of steering groups, which is quite large for the institution, and clarifying their roles, responsibilities and relationships, in order to identify duplication of functions and redundancies. The principle of wide participation of staff

in steering groups should be balanced with ensuring that participation does not contribute to an overload of work for those involved.

During the audit visit, the audit team asked the top management what kind of plans HAMK has to develop the quality system. The answer stressed the connection between the quality system and delivering the Strategy 2020; another important development area is further supporting internationalisation. HAMK has also plans to continue the simplification of the quality system (as mentioned above) and to utilise technology further in order to make the quality system more accessible and user-friendly. There was also recognition of further efforts needed for extending the use of the Stara system, in particular for the development and evaluation of staff competences, in order to enhance quality and deliver some of the new activities in Strategy 2020.

The audit team encourages HAMK to continue the reflective self-evaluation of the quality system, but recommends that HAMK keeps the number of development tools and activities as few as possible and bears in mind that the "big picture" of the development work should be seen and communicated to the HAMK community and external stakeholders in a consistent and timely manner.

Quality management of the institution's core duties

6.1 Degree education

Quality management of Häme University of Applied Sciences supports the planning, implementation and development of degree education. HAMK has systematic and well-established quality management procedures – quality guidelines – which provide excellent support for the implementation and development of degree education as part of HAMK Strategy 2020. HAMK's guidelines are logical and comprehensible and they are uniformly used in all degree education and main Support Services. The institution has an excellent digital information system for the development of degree education and information is used systematically and successfully. The staff and students are committed to and actively involved in quality work. Special attention, however, should be given to the workload generated by the quality management procedures of degree education. External stakeholders are involved in quality work, but their involvement is not consistent across all degree programmes. The key Support Services linked to degree education are actively involved in quality management activities.

*The quality management of degree education is at an **advanced** stage.*

Quality management supports the achievement of goals set for degree education

In the self-evaluation report, HAMK presents the figure below (Figure 6), which illustrates the close connections between strategy-based key goals of degree education, the overall development process enabling HAMK to achieve its goals, and the operative quality management procedures, which support goal achievement.



FIGURE 6. Framework for Degree Education at HAMK.

In HAMK Strategy 2020 "Keeping students central" is crystallised as the main principle in all activities of education. Cooperation, digitalisation, and the immediate correction of quality defects, combined with the continuous process of the PDCA cycle are also relevant strategic principles framing HAMK's degree education. According to the self-evaluation report and the interviews, the PDCA cycle's philosophy and activities are well absorbed in degree education. Multiple quality management manuals, called *guidelines* guide the curriculum process as a whole and the continuous development of education. The guidelines operatively verify the degree education's link to the institution's strategy and PDCA cycle. An essential connecting element is the staff's commitment to the guidelines, which according to the self-evaluation report and the interviews is creditable. For example, in designing objectives for degree education, the Guidelines for Curricula and Competence descriptions are used to assure that the goals set for degree education are clear and uniformly accessible in all degree programmes.

To enforce the student-centred approach in degree education, in its Strategy 2020 HAMK launched three new study models:

- 8–16: Work week model, credits gained weekly, constant guidance, studying is equivalent to working in a full-time job. The student is present and works together with others in diverse ways.
- 24/7: Studies progress quicker than the normal rate. Students plan a great deal themselves and they are very independent. Individual and diverse opportunities and needs of the workplace are taken into account in the best possible way.
- 18–100: A way of studying that makes the most of learning at the workplace.

These changes will have been fully put into practice by the end of the strategy period in 2020. The student intake of autumn 2014 were the first to follow the new study models. According to the interviews, there is noticeable evidence that the study models are already starting to frame all degree education successfully.

HAMK's education has recently commenced an extensive process of development. The curricula have changed from a course system to a modular system, where the academic year consists of four 15-credit modules in all degree programmes. The module system also adopts a team-teaching method in all degree education. Students write the implementation plan together with the teacher team and can thus affect the construction of their learning process and the planning of assignments and skills demonstrations. Both internationalisation and RDI activities are integrated to the modular system. Digital communication tools have an increasingly important role in the planning, delivery and continuous evaluation of education in degree programmes. The Intranet utilises Office 365 interactive tools (e.g. One Drive and Yammer), which provide a user-friendly, cooperative platform for both teachers and students.

In the interviews, it became apparent that the staff are committed to the strategy-based development activities in HAMK's degree education. However, both the teaching staff and the students gave the message that HAMK should arrange more training and staff development activities for the personnel in degree programmes to support strategy-driven development; for example, more English-language training for the teaching staff would be useful. The self-evaluation report stated that for supporting degree programme management in the process of pedagogical change, management training is provided to the Heads of Degrees Programmes, however doubts were raised whether this is enough. The audit team advises HAMK to arrange more training and staff development activities for the personnel in degree programmes to support strategy-driven development, and training how to teach in English.

Guidelines are a functional tool for ensuring quality in degree education

HAMK's quality management procedures are planned closely to support all processes of degree education. The process of education is supported and its quality is verified by a great number of HAMK guidelines. There are at least 24 guidelines strictly instructing degree programmes offered at HAMK. Examples of relevant quality management procedures for degree education include the guidelines for:

- Degree regulations
- Curricula, planning, implementation and assessment of courses
- Competence description of degree programmes
- International double degree programmes
- Recognition and accreditation of prior learning or learning acquired elsewhere during studies (RPL)
- Personal study plan
- Student feedback system
- Assessment of studies
- Study counselling
- Student exchange
- Thesis work, Master's thesis, Ensuring good scientific practice.

The guidelines are updated based on changes to the strategy and feedback coming from the personnel. This process is very well linked to the operations of the Educational Support Services, which coordinates the process of creating new guidelines and removing or updating the old ones. A team of specialists takes part in the updating process, and the entire staff can comment on the guidelines online in the consultation phase. HAMK's guidelines are easily accessible on the Intranet and also the students have access to the guidelines on the Intranet pages of their degree programmes.

Together with the Guideline for Self-evaluation, this code of practice related to education covers all central parts of the degree education process. There is convincing proof throughout the self-evaluation report, interviews and material on HAMK's Intranet that the HAMK guidelines are extensively used in all degree programmes. The basis for coherent activities on different campuses is hence well achieved.

According to the interviews, the staff have an especially strong commitment to the guidelines. This is based on the successful processes of implementation and continuous development over a long course of time. This practice has evolved since the early 1990s and it offers operational evidence of a deeply embedded quality culture, which is at the very roots of HAMK's ways of working. This cultural built-in character enables fluency in the everyday activities and explains why the workload generated by the quality management procedures of degree education is, according to most of the interviews, not experienced as being too extensive. The staff's workload from quality management activities and strategy-driven development activities should however be evaluated and monitored continuously.

The number of guidelines confirms the technical uniformity of the degree programmes on different campuses, and as such it could potentially pose a threat for agile and innovative adjustments to education. However, the philosophical nature of the academic education obliges it to be open for creative activities. According to the evidence the threat is not currently a concern in HAMK's degree education. The guidelines are used to secure a sufficient level of coherence, which is a

stepping stone for further innovation. As one interviewee said, "Usually you read the guidelines when you have a problem. You don't just read them for fun." The guidelines serve as a useful code of practice especially for novice teachers who are just starting their career at HAMK. As the operations change, it is however important to identify the point where a new practice can be formalised as a guideline and/or the old guideline can no longer be followed. HAMK outlines that in the near future, the guidelines are to be developed to meet the needs of the digital world and a mobile environment, which is also endorsed by the audit team.

Information systems are well integrated and produce relevant information

The PDCA cycle works as a framework for producing and processing information for the improvement of degree programmes. The information flow coming from feedback, separate evaluations and the Business Intelligence system is extensive. The Business Intelligence tool brings together data from various sources and secures the reliability of the analyses. HAMK's Intranet is a rich source of updated degree education information for staff and students. According to the interviews and the self-evaluation report, the information is actively used for development purposes. It is also discussed on the interactive Office 365 tool Yammer. At the managerial level the information is used in HAMK's performance agreement process, which is drafted each year and specifies the qualitative and numerical targets for both the Schools and the degree programmes. The education processes are continuously evaluated with reference to the performance agreement in special consultations (Rector's hearings, strategy rounds, development days) organised in each School under the leadership of the Rector. During these consultations, the School's management analyses and evaluates the achievement of targets set for the School. Each School's management also receives feedback and an updated review of the present state of the degree programmes.

Monitoring the students' progress and the overall productivity of the degree programmes is made easy by the well-integrated information systems. All relevant information is easily accessible in a digital format. The various forms of student feedback cover the entire study process. The feedback is processed, and if necessary, development measures are launched following the principle of immediate corrective action stated in the strategy. Examples of rapid corrections were given both in the staff and student interviews. New mobile channels have been introduced for student feedback, and the collection of module feedback has just been harmonised by a new guideline. There is pronounced evidence that student feedback is actively used. The interviewed students were uniform in their expression that "their voice has been heard."

Many parties actively involved in quality work – stakeholders could be more involved

The students, teachers, administrative staff and management of HAMK are actively involved in quality work and the development of degree education. The roles of the different parties are explicitly defined in the quality management procedures and the cooperative processes are underlined. For example, content planning of degree programmes takes place in the Board of Directors, at meetings of Heads of Degree Programmes, and in jointly organised strategic development and planning

seminars. External stakeholders also have opportunities to participate in quality work in degree programmes. External stakeholders however expressed the wish to become more involved, which is undoubtedly an area for further development in the quality management of HAMK's degree education. There is no converging guideline for stakeholders' role in degree education as a whole. FUAS cooperation also has a role in the quality work. Joint evaluations are done regularly, the latest example of which is the joint pre-audit evaluation in 2015 and the curriculum evaluation carried out from 2014 to 2015.

The student feedback systems are well organised and students have diverse ways to be heard. According to the self-evaluation report, each student has a possibility (a right and a duty) to give feedback on the course/module level, on programme implementation, studying environments, guidance and teaching. The student feedback covers the different stages of the studies. The students' employment is followed upon their graduation.

To support the students in planning their studies, performance appraisals are conducted with them once every academic year. In this process with the teacher tutor, students' personal study plans are also updated. Representatives of the Student Union HAMKO are involved in the work of the student counsellor team, which allows the students to participate in the planning processes of study guidance. Students have a role no longer just as a source of feedback in the HAMK academic community, but as a key cooperative partner in the development of education. Further strengthening this trend could be an important success factor for HAMK in the near future.

The cooperative processes inside HAMK's degree education include several good practices. In addition to the annual performance agreement negotiations and development discussions there are:

- Rector's hearings (annually)
- Strategy rounds in the Schools (annually)
- Development days in Schools (four times per year)
- Student hearings in degree programmes (twice a year)
- Informal, unannounced visits of the Rector to the degree programmes (randomly).

HAMK has several boards or steering groups for UAS management and quality management purposes: the HAMK Board, the Board of Directors, the Examination Board, the Study Grants Board, the Quality and Risk Management Steering Group, the Steering Group for Business Activities, the Developing Group for Student Welfare, the RDI Steering Group, the Steering Group for International Affairs, the Global Education Team, the Group of Heads of Degree Programmes, and the Safety and Crisis Management Group. All of these groups have more or less frequent responsibilities in degree education, which further emphasises the co-creative nature of the HAMK quality management processes. On the other hand, it means that there are nearly 200 members in different management, steering and working groups annually, which may also raise some serious workload issues for the staff. The audit team recommends HAMK to critically review the number of different boards and steering groups.

Support Services enable practice of quality management

The development of education is the responsibility of the Vice-Rector and the Development Manager of Education, Unit Directors and the Heads of Degree Programmes. The Education development services operates in key areas of the education process (curriculum – provision of courses – implementation planning – guidance and counselling), supporting the degree programmes and coordinating joint development. Education development is supported by regular meetings between the Heads of Degree Programmes, the Development Manager of the Education being the chairperson. The student affairs secretaries of the Schools work as a team, coordinated by the Head of Student Services. The student counsellors in turn work as a team, discussing and agreeing upon common counselling practices. The activities of the student counsellors are coordinated by the Head of Education Development Services.

The most central Support Services for degree education are the Educational development services and ICT services. For students, the most important Support Services are the Student Affairs Office, financial aid services, services of the Student Psychologist and the Student Welfare Officer, exercise services, internationalisation services, library and information services and IT services. Feedback from the Support Service customers comes through both formal and informal channels and the interviews confirmed that corrections are made based on the feedback. Educational development services have an essential role in maintaining quality in degree education and developing degree education as a whole. Their task is to take care of the educational architecture, coordinate the student feedback system and maintain the guidelines system. Educational Support Services participate in student hearings in the degree programmes and development days in the units, where the students give direct feedback for the purpose of developing degree education. The ICT services have constructed a comprehensive data production and data mining system (Business Intelligence), which serves teachers, students and external stakeholders and can be highlighted as a good practice.

Support Services have a central role in enabling HAMK quality management practices. The audit team had however difficulties in defining their scope. The terminology used in the self-evaluation report and in the interviews to describe HAMK's Support Services related to degree education was not clear or univocal.

Finally, the audit team had a robust impression of the presence of a deeply embedded quality culture during the audit interviews. In degree education this culminated to the question of the real use of HAMK's quality guidelines and the PDCA cycle. It is evident that the guidelines successfully frame all degree education. This particular uniformity is a major strength for HAMK. The use of HAMK's quality guidelines permeates all of the samples of degree education and defines the HAMK quality standard for education activities.

6.2 Samples of degree education

6.2.1 Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering

The Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering is part of the School of Technology. The curriculum is module-based and education is delivered in English. Education and quality management activities are in line with the HAMK Strategy 2020 and quality management procedures. The HAMK quality management guidelines provide excellent support for the planning, implementation and evaluation of education and are used accordingly. Personnel groups and students participate in the development of the education and in the quality work for the Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering. However, student participation has a declining trend. External stakeholders are also involved in the development of the degree. There is prominent evidence of quality work enhancing the quality of this degree programme.

*The quality management of the Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering is at an **advanced** stage.*

Guidelines support planning in the degree programme

The Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering is a 240 credit, 4-year Bachelor programme, attracting 135 students in 2015. The aim of the degree programme is to promote competencies for utilising information and electrical technology in developing automation technology for new applications. The education focuses on wide-ranging studies from electrical engineering to the automation of production machinery and devices and the maintenance of production facilities. Students can easily find the curriculum from HAMK's website.

Aligned with HAMK Strategy 2020, the Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering applies the three-way study model and modular implementation. The students take four modules in an academic year, accounting to 15 credits per module. Participants in the degree programme are full-time students who follow the usual workplace rhythm and spend the normal working hours (8–16) studying. The curriculum utilises FUAS cooperation in both quality management and study cooperation.

The quality management of the planning, teaching and learning environments is based on the PDCA cycle. HAMK's quality guidelines carefully instruct the planning of education, and the interviews confirmed that the guidelines are used accordingly. Some criticism however comes from the slow process of updating them: "The planning of new modules requires new quality guidelines that are not always ready in time", one interviewee said. Furthermore, the self-evaluation report mentioned that the planning process could be more dynamic, as the current process does not allow fast changes in the content of teaching during the academic year. There is also quite little scope for improvisation, except within the module themes, in the interviewees' experience.

Curriculum work is systematic and methodical, and a specific annual cycle is followed in the planning: the revision of competence descriptions is based on feedback received annually on the descriptions already in use. The new version is developed in the autumn to ensure that it can be approved by the end of the following January.

The entire teaching staff participates in curriculum work, and students as well as the HAMK information systems provide information to guide the work. The role of the external stakeholders however should be more emphasised. They have opportunities to participate in the development of the degree programme at the moment, but their role could be made more active.

The implementation of educational provision is informed by student feedback

HAMK's quality guidelines instruct the implementation and quality management of degree education in detail, and there is coherent evidence that the guidelines are used accordingly. In quality management associated with the implementation, student feedback has a significant role. Feedback is collected at least twice in every module. The content and implementation of a module can be adjusted based on the feedback while the module is still in progress. The students meet their teacher tutors in performance appraisals, providing an opportunity for giving direct feedback. External stakeholders give feedback to HAMK especially on customer-orientated projects, work placements and theses. While feedback is collected in projects to some extent, the most systematic feedback is gathered on work placements and theses.

Teaching methods are interactive, including team work, lab work and learning by doing. Open and immediate feedback is enabled on a daily basis. A variety of methods are used to assess learning: written and oral tests, demonstrations, presentations, reports, self-assessments and peer-assessments. The aim is to promote learning by means of continuous and encouraging assessment and feedback. Assessment is documented in Winha, from where it is transferred to SoleOps, the system used by the students to prepare their personal study plans. This allows the students to keep up with the assessment of their studies and their progress in real time. In Moodle, individual assignments can also be received and assessed, and feedback is given on them.

The data coming from the Business Intelligence system is actively used. The reports provide practical information about the situation assessment, indicate areas in need of development and lay a foundation for developing assessment. The information is processed systematically in development seminars and the weekly teaching staff meetings, which are documented. Any shortcomings are reacted to immediately, and corrective measures are agreed upon and documented on the Intranet.

Staff are active and committed to quality work but student participation is lacking

The entire staff actively participate in quality work at the degree level and cooperation is lively also at the School level. The staff take actively part in the development-orientated weekly meetings and the joint development seminars of the School of Technology. The involvement of the teaching staff in quality work is active and committed, whereas student participation is

not particularly active. The number of students interested in curriculum work has continuously declined, although the feedback systems in the degree programme are comprehensive and well maintained. An effective solution for activating the students has to be found.

To keep up interaction with the employers, the teaching staff of the programme actively monitor developments in their field, discuss the future of automation and electrical engineering with companies that employ newly graduated engineers, and participate in key seminars of the field. The most important ones are the annual company cooperation seminars organised by businesses, and in particular, development seminars directed at educational institutions. In order to systematically involve external stakeholders in the development and quality management of the degree programme, the audit team would advise establishing a more controlled and methodical cooperation team, body, or network to handle stakeholder relations.

6.2.2 Master's Degree Programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship

The Master's Degree Programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship is part of the School of Entrepreneurship and Business. The curriculum is module-based and students are adult students who combine work with their studies. Education is delivered in English. The education and quality management activities are in line with the HAMK Strategy 2020 and quality management procedures. The HAMK quality management guidelines provide excellent support for the planning, implementation and evaluation of education and are used accordingly. Personnel groups and students participate in quality work actively and with commitment. External stakeholders are also consistently involved in the quality work of the programme. There is distinct evidence of the enhancement effect of the quality work.

*The quality management of the Master's Degree Programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship is at an **advanced** stage.*

Guidelines together with a special steering group support planning in the degree programme

The 90-credit, 2–2,5 year Master's Degree Programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship (BME) is intended for persons who wish to develop their international competences and know-how in international business. In 2015 there were 110 students in the programme. The studies focus on the internationalisation of small and medium-size enterprises, develop the students' understanding and knowledge of global business environments, strategic management and innovation as well as customer relationship management in international markets. Students can easily find the curriculum from the HAMK website.

Aligned with the HAMK Strategy 2020, the education in the BME programme is implemented in a modular system, based on the 18–100 study model, where the studies utilise learning in the workplace. Students can also speed up their studies following the 24/7 study model. The curriculum utilises FUAS cooperation in both quality management and study cooperation.

The quality of the curricula for the BME programme is managed actively and systematically according to the PDCA cycle and HAMK's quality management procedures. There is clear evidence in the self-evaluation report and interviews that HAMK's guidelines are followed extensively in planning the degree programme.

Interaction with employers is active and systematic. The BME programme has a steering group which comprises representatives of business life in the region and participates in the development of the curricula. This systematises the cooperation with stakeholders and is a well-functioning practice, making it a recommendable good practice for all HAMK degree programmes. The programme's teaching staff also meet with various stakeholders of business and industry, for example at events organised by the Häme Chamber of Commerce, Häme Entrepreneurs' Association, development companies in the region and Team Finland as well as in various seminars on topical issues. Interaction and continuous dialogue with international partner institutions and comparisons of curricula and benchmarking of good practices in the BME programme expands the scope of development and at the same time strengthens the staff competencies.

The students contribute to curriculum design by providing feedback on programme contents, but also by sharing their expertise concerning competence needs among the workplace. A speciality of the BME programme is that the students' work organisations serve as important learning environments. The Master's theses in the programme are usually related to development tasks for the student's own workplace. The use of the students' expertise highlights the cooperative nature of the degree education.

The quality of education is continuously monitored and improved by staff working in teams

The implementation of education and the degree programme's quality management follow HAMK Strategy 2020 and guidelines. The degree programme consists of 15-credit modules, in which three 5-credit themes add up to one 15-credit module. The delivery is student-centred using e.g. team work and flipped classroom methods. Learning outcomes are assessed throughout the studies as the teacher monitors the student teams' work and progress. The starting point for the assessment of learning is the Guideline on the assessment of studies. The student teams produce written and visual material and images on each theme to be studied, including reports, analyses, videos etc. The teams demonstrate the competence they have achieved during the joint contact teaching day at the end of each theme. The theme specific assessment criteria are introduced to the students at the beginning of the theme. At the conclusion of a theme, the teacher gives both a numeric and a qualitative assessment. For the themes where the achieved competence and its demonstration are based on a group assignment the group is given a joint qualitative assessment and grade.

The studies are interactive and take place in student teams of 4–5 persons. The staff work as teams, where the monitoring and continuous improvement of quality are in a key role. The HAMK online tools enable the teacher teams to continuously monitor the work of the student teams. The staff of the programme have a common Office 365 website where they can collect and share material related to the planning and implementation of the programme.

The themes studied in the programme are approached as "sprints" of roughly one month, consisting of various phases. In line with the principles of the PDCA cycle, any shortcomings are corrected before the implementation of the following sprint. At the end of the sprint, the students also have a feedback meeting, where they assess their learning, the team work and the operating methods.

Evaluative information is collected extensively and the interviews gave firm evidence that this data is used for continuous development and also rapid improvements are carried out. The modules and themes can be immediately updated based on feedback from the students and teachers. Key information sources for degree development are the performance agreements (both teachers' and students'), the collection of student feedback on modules and module themes, employer feedback, staff feedback, development discussions, and the funding indicators of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Wide participation in the degree programme's quality work is commendable

The processes for implementing and developing the BME programme are commendably cooperative, which the audit team views as an important strength. The Heads of Education together with the Support Services for Education outline the principles of education planning. The contents of the degree programme are agreed upon in the annual curriculum negotiations. The Principal Lecturer responsible for the BME programme participates in the School's Degree Programme Development Group. The responsible Principal Lecturer has regular meetings with other Principal Lecturers in the Master's degree programmes for planning, feedback discussions and development. The students participate by giving feedback on each module at its conclusion and by using the OPALA feedback system at the point of their graduation. Other staff groups take part in the planning of education, for example by examining the potential for digital activities. The degree programme steering group comments on the plans. The BME programme also works in close cooperation with the Finnish-language degree programme in Business Development. Some criticism in the self-evaluation report comes from the new way of the management of the Master's degrees, which used to be part of the School of Professional Teacher Education: "Cooperation and peer activities between the Principal Lecturers have declined, as a natural forum for cooperation no longer exists. The change in the management structure (division of the Master's degree unit into four different units to operate under five Heads of Education) has had the effect of reducing cooperation and systematic approach to the activities." The audit team suggests that, regardless of the changes in the management structure, cooperation between Master's degree programmes should be strengthened.

The BME programme defines students and their background organisations as the most important stakeholders in the planning of education, and interaction with them is continuous. Master's degree students are highly committed to and motivated in providing feedback and participating in development and quality work related to the programme. Stakeholder cooperation in quality management is continuous, for example through the students' thesis processes. Employer feedback is also collected continuously, in particular on the theses. This provides important information on the impact of the theses. The degree programme steering group members also represent

employers, and their feedback is taken into account. According to the self-evaluation report and the interviews, the steering group is most recently renewed as an extensive Advisory Body of the whole School, where degree programmes can invite their own members.

6.2.3 Double Degree Programme in Design

The Double Degree Programme in Design is part of the School of Entrepreneurship and Business. The programme's curriculum is based on a modular system, organised around themes. Education is practical, with a philosophy of "learning by doing." The education and quality management activities are very well linked with the HAMK Strategy 2020 and quality management procedures. HAMK's quality management guidelines provide excellent support for the planning, implementation and evaluation of education and are used accordingly. The staff and students are active and committed to quality work. External stakeholders are also involved in quality work. It is apparent that the quality work has an enhancing effect on the degree programme.

*The quality management of the Double Degree Programme in Design is at an **advanced** stage.*

Quality guidelines are evidently utilised in preparations of the degree programme

The Double Degree Programme in Design is a 240-credit, 3,5–4 years Bachelor's programme. In 2015 there were 237 students studying Design, four of whom were enrolled in the double degree programme. The studies aim at mastering the entire design and manufacturing process of the product, with a customer-orientated approach and understanding the importance of economic and ecological standpoints in the design process. The students gain expertise in the materials of their design field and product-specific quality requirements. The studies include projects in cooperation with entrepreneurs in these fields. Students can easily find the curriculum from the HAMK website.

The content of the programme is developed together with other degree programmes in the School of Entrepreneurship and Business as well as in co-operation with international and key partners in equivalent fields.

The Degree Programme in Design has a double-degree agreement with the West Saxon University of Applied Sciences of Zwickau (Fakultät der Wästsächsischen Hochschule Zwickau). According to the interview, the double degree programme does not need any special quality management activities in addition to HAMK's regular quality management procedures. To make the double degree is however an option and in the same programme there can be double degree students and ordinary degree programme students at the same time.

The programme contains both modules and themes, combining RDI and artistic activities with learning in projects and while working. Each module is worth 15 credits. Prior learning in design is taken into account in the studies, making it possible for students to complete their studies in an accelerated, 24/7 study model.

The curriculum preparation is a continuous process, in accordance with the PDCA cycle. The content of modular curricula, learning outcomes and degree programme profile are revised each year, with an eye on employers' needs, trends in international partner institutions of higher education, and other similar educational institutions in Finland.

As in all HAMK degree programmes, the basis for the quality management of the Degree Programme in Design is strong staff commitment to the use of HAMK guidelines. There is prominent evidence from the self-evaluation report and interviews that the HAMK quality guidelines are used for the preparations and quality management of the Degree Programme in Design.

Both students and teachers participate in the curriculum development process. The annual student-centred evaluation activities include a qualitative survey for students, group discussions with tutors and a common feedback discussion. The feedback received in the process is used to develop the programme for the following academic year.

The Degree Programme in Design is completed in close, project-based co-operation and interaction with the workplaces, which also strengthens the scope for continuous RDI activities and creates a channel for employers' feedback. The staff has active connections with the working life through their own artistic activities beside the school work, which the audit team considers to be a remarkable strength and good practise. Systematic curricular cooperation takes place with the invited stakeholder members of the School's newly founded Advisory board.

Feedback system is comprehensive and leads to improved provision of education

HAMK's quality guidelines are used to assure the successful delivery of the education in the Degree Programme in Design. Teaching and learning activities are practical and student-centred, focusing on learning by doing. The assessment of learning and feedback to students are in focus. Various forms of assignments are used to promote learning, such as learning tasks, learning journals, documenting and process portfolios, group and team work, research and development tasks and workplace projects. Learning outcomes are assessed throughout the studies. Assessment is based on numerical, oral, written and peer grading in accordance with the assessment methods specified for each theme or module. Portfolio practices are also used in the assessment of student learning and competence.

Beyond the comprehensive module feedback system, student feedback is received continuously in ordinary interaction with the students. Weekly discussions and tutorials with the students are important sources of information. There is also confirming evidence that feedback is taken into account and improvements are made. Students however expressed their worry concerning the great workload of the teachers, which eminently hampers their ability to have enough time with the students or respond to their special needs quickly. The students desire to have more time with the teachers, saying that the "teachers are as frustrated with the situation as the students are." Similarly, the teachers also underlined in the self-evaluation report the challenge of finding common time for all the activities needed for both student-teacher

interaction and strategy-based development activities. The audit team proposes that the staff of this programme, in discussion with the management of HAMK, would seek solutions for the issue of the teachers' workload.

The progress of students' studies is continuously followed by the HAMK information systems and by using the information coming from the teacher tutors, a guidance counsellor and Educational Support Services. Key evaluation methods for the continuous PDCA cycle development of education are student feedback in modules and themes, quality feedback surveys, staff feedback, performance appraisals, and feedback from the employers and the design field. Financial indicators of the Ministry of Education and Culture's funding model are monitored via HAMK's information system.

Participation in quality work is wide

The educational processes are commendably cooperative, involving the students, teachers, other staff and external stakeholders. The main principles of the education planning are defined by the Head of the degree programme and the Education Support Services Team. The Curriculum planning team of the study programme plans the contents of the curriculum which is elaborated on and acknowledged in the annual negotiation process. As mentioned before the students participate in planning the education by giving feedback in multiple ways. The invited members of the School's Advisory board participate in the ongoing profiling process of the education. Alumni activities also play an important role in developing the degree programme.

Co-operation with upper secondary educational institutions serves the development of workplace relevance. These include the Tavastia Vocational College, Glass Department of Ikaalinen College of Crafts and Design and Nuutajärvi Glass School.

The staff of the degree programme participate actively in their professional fields which promotes the project-based studies carried out in the Degree Programme in Design. Information coming from the staff and student exchange and other international interaction is also utilised in developing the programme.

6.3 Research, development and innovation activities as well as artistic activities

Häme University of Applied Sciences has functional RDI quality management procedures, which produce relevant information for the purposes of different operators at HAMK, especially for the management and staff. While staff and students are involved in quality work, stakeholders are still only partially involved. The audit team recommends opening up opportunities in appropriate HAMK steering groups to stakeholder representatives, especially the groups related to RDI. The quality management of the key Support Services connected to RDI functions relatively well.

*The quality management of research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities is at a **developing** stage.*

Guidelines ensure consistent levels of quality in research units

HAMK operates in a large area of four cities and neighbouring municipalities in Kanta-Häme and Etelä-Pirkanmaa regions and offers education in many different fields of study, which gives the institution opportunities to interact with a variety of business and industry partners. Concentrating research to the four research units (see Chapter 2) has been a strategic choice. According to HAMK's 2014 Annual Report, the aim of the restructuring of the research units was to "increase the quality and competitiveness of HAMK's RDI activities."

According to the audit material and the interviews, HAMK has a genuine wish to conduct and develop applied research. This was especially underlined in the interviews by the research unit directors. Evidence for this ambition includes HAMK's versatile projects with companies, the renewal of the Bachelor's thesis, beneficial partnerships and the willingness to develop applied research indicators, which HAMK concedes are missing at the moment. The audit team suggests turning this into a new guideline process. HAMK also has goals for international RDI co-operation, for example with their current strategic international partners – Feevale University in Brazil and VIA University College in Denmark – as well as in teacher education. However, for the time being HAMK is operating mostly domestically in RDI.

The quality system of HAMK includes guidelines for RDI activities. The guidelines are formulated together with the RDI staff and discussed by the Quality and Risk Management Steering Group. In RDI, HAMK's quality system and guidelines are seen as a helpful tool for ensuring that all research units work at the same level of quality. The interviews confirmed that HAMK's quality system is valued and in use in all units.

RDI activities demonstrate systematic use of the PDCA cycle

The audit team found that the PDCA cycle is in systematic use at HAMK within RDI activities, as illustrated by the following:

- (PLAN) HAMK Strategy 2020 defines the RDI activities and the performance agreements of HAMK's Schools set out the basic policies. On this basis, the research units draw up three-year research programmes which specify key research areas. According to the research unit directors, more detailed goals for research needs are set annually for each academic year. The directors were unanimous that the current system has eased dialogue and collaboration among themselves in planning RDI activities.
- (DO) On the basis of the formulated plans, the units' research teams offer students a learning environment with versatile projects, involving any number of students, from 1–50. However, the audit team discovered that these projects are not well known among HAMK students. Most interviewed students had not participated in any large HAMK projects, did not know which projects were available, or where to find information on them. Projects related to theses and studies seemed to be the most common way for students to take part in applied research. The audit team recommends that RDI projects and opportunities should be made more visible to all HAMK students.
- (CHECK) The evaluation of RDI activities at HAMK consists of external reviews, feedback information, indicator information and internal evaluations. According to the self-evaluation report, these activities and other methods have been in regular use also before the establishment of the new research units. The success of RDI and associated projects is mainly measured by customer satisfaction. In the interviews of HAMK management and partners, long partnerships (for example with Ruukki), steady student recruitment and versatile projects with companies were mentioned as evidence of good quality.
- (ACT) The results of feedback information are analysed and decisions are made based on the analysis. In the staff interviews it was mentioned that, when possible, the research at HAMK continues after the customer project is completed. This is a good practice and also beneficial to students. The results of the RDI projects are presented to the customers and published in different media depending on the type of research – whether as a scientific publication, on the web, and or even in newspapers. This is a good practice and also good advertisement for the services HAMK offers.

The audit material and interviews confirmed that indicator results are regularly followed in the research units and in the Quality and Risk Management Steering Group, Board of Directors and the Management Teams of the Schools. There are also meetings between the research unit directors and the Vice-Rector approximately every three weeks. The RDI Steering Group, which meets quarterly, is responsible for monitoring strategic operations, following project implementation and developing internal cooperation. According to the staff and management interviews, the system is working and information is flowing. However, the audit team found that stakeholder representatives are not invited to steering groups. To increase stakeholder input, the audit team advises opening the HAMK steering groups to stakeholder representatives, especially groups related to RDI.

HAMK has a coherent policy for choosing the right projects and customers for RDI. According to the interviews and audit material, the goal in the near future is to conduct more projects with companies and to have more business contacts. The new 8–16 study model is designed to increase the number of student projects done in collaboration with companies. However, quality indicators for this purpose did not seem to be in place yet and plans to develop such indicators did not surface during the audit. The risk is that the quality of projects might not be consistent

if students are not fully aware of the HAMK quality goals. Also, some interviewees expressed concerns that students might have difficulties finding enough company contacts if left to the task on their own. It was also not clear whether the time allocated for teachers to monitor projects will be sufficient. The audit team proposes updating the existing guidelines or creating a new guideline for student projects with companies.

Business partnerships in RDI rely too heavily on personal contacts

The self-evaluation report mentioned that the workload created by RDI is heavy. In the interviews with the top management, the ongoing development work and multiple processes were of high interest and a sign of excellence. At the implementation level – among teachers and other staff – the changes were not always seen as positive in terms of the workload they create. This seemed to be mainly due to time-management issues, as the teaching staff were clearly under pressure implementing the new module-based teaching system. The teacher and student interviews revealed that teachers are the ones mainly responsible for connecting students with companies. Relations with business partners rely heavily on personal contacts, but the level of interest toward and possibilities for networking varied among staff from different Schools at HAMK. The audit team recommends HAMK to ensure that the allocated resources are sufficient in relation to the workload in RDI-related activities.

Students are connected with the surrounding business life from the beginning of their studies through projects, theses, and internships, which are mandatory in every programme. According to the interviews, feedback from all of the aforementioned areas is collected regularly, in an organised manner. However, from some interviews it appeared that not all the information is processed methodically and sometimes there might even be too much information available.

According to the self-evaluation report, "in RDI, funding and partnerships are followed up by using the project database, and customer satisfaction surveys are conducted." However, the interviewed stakeholder representatives were not very familiar with HAMK's quality tools and had no clear understanding of the surveys conducted. The stakeholder representatives also did not seem to be interested in actual quality data. They placed more value in the concrete outcomes: skilful students, useful projects, and services provided by HAMK. All of the interviewees were very happy with the quality of these aspects. Producing relevant quality data for business representatives in a form they see useful and consistently involving stakeholders in quality work are challenges for HAMK.

Indicators for regional development work and societal impact are a work-in-progress

The audit team perceived from the audit material and the interviews that the processes and reporting tools are being continuously developed at HAMK. However, developing relevant indicators for regional development work and societal impact was identified as one of the development challenges, which the audit team agrees. There are systematic efforts at HAMK for making the information more accessible and understandable. The Repotronic project management system was introduced

for this reason at the beginning of 2015 to replace the earlier Projektori system. The audit team agrees that it would be useful to target information to different user groups (management, teachers, other staff, students and stakeholders) through the new Repotronic system.

The self-evaluation report describes HAMK's Support Services as comprehensive and effective for RDI activities. They consist of information management, communication, risk management, international and general secretarial services, as well as the services of competitive tendering specialists, lawyers, and senior specialists. Quality management is integrated in the activities of these services. In the interviews, the Support Services were seen as very important, well-functioning, and valuable.

6.4 Societal impact and regional development work

Häme University of Applied Sciences has an active role in the region and a lot of well-functioning partnerships with companies and different stakeholders. The quality management procedures however do not fully support the achievement of institutional strategic goals of societal impact and regional development. There are good practices in the quality management of this area at HAMK for example in continuing education and open university of UAS education, but also some shortcomings in information processes as well as quality tools. While the management, staff and students show commitment to quality work, external stakeholders are only partially involved. The quality management of the key Support Services linked with regional development work is not yet completely functional. HAMK Business Services on the main campus has great potential for serving as a meeting point for students and companies, but the challenge is to make the services known among these target groups.

*The quality management of societal impact and regional development work is at an **emerging** stage.*

Societal impact and regional development not fully supported by quality management procedures

HAMK Strategy 2020 starts with a target: "Häme University of Applied Sciences offers the most inspiring higher education and has the most work-related research activities." HAMK has a lot to offer to the surrounding businesses and industries: education packages (open university of applied sciences education, made-to-order education), research, business services, projects with students, and long-term partnerships. HAMK itself is also a large employer in the region, with nearly 600 staff members.

HAMK is foremost a regional operator, but it also has great interest in internationalisation. The audit material states that HAMK's international partnerships as well as the export of education aim to support the internationalisation of the region. This could be reinforced, for example, by organising way to introduce HAMK's international and exchange students to partner companies. The interviewed international students all stated that there is a need for more collaboration opportunities and contacts with local companies.

When discussing regional development in the interviews, HAMK's Business Services was often mentioned. Business Services has an office located on HAMK's main campus, which offers information, expertise, and training for both companies and students. It has great potential, but the challenge of making their services known to local companies as well as to students persists. The audit team recommends clarifying and promoting the purpose and services of the Business Services office to both business representatives and students as well as putting special efforts into reaching international students who seemed to be most unaware of the services of the office.

Continuing education and the open university of applied sciences education are affiliated with each other at HAMK. They present many opportunities for HAMK, from courses planned for individual students to made-to-order programmes designed especially for companies. According to the staff interviews, the educational content is planned in close cooperation with companies and actors in the region and the diversity of customers is large. Quality management activities generally follow the same principles as in degree education, although the online feedback questionnaire and evaluation system are specifically designed for their customers. HAMK also has specific guidelines for these purposes: the Guideline for Studies at the open university of applied sciences and the Guideline for Continuing education. In addition, the Steering Group for Fee-Based Services (referred to as Business Activities in other contexts) was established in 2015.

HAMK's self-evaluation report states that the operations related to societal impact and regional development work are planned in cooperation with regional actors and key groups of developers and labour market actors. The planning is based on national policies, regional and municipal strategies, forecasts and regional agreements. The interviews showed that HAMK is a well-respected partner in many fields. For projects and RDI, HAMK has diverse partners in the region, including secondary level education providers and the vocational education institutions. However, HAMK struggles to create connections to small and medium-size companies, although these companies represent 90% of the region's economy. The audit team suggests that more effective efforts for engaging with the small and medium stakeholder representatives should be initiated in order to avoid a situation where operations are planned mainly together with stakeholders representing large businesses.

According to the self-evaluation report and the management and staff interviews, quality management procedures connected to regional development work at HAMK include systematic use of the indicators and face-to-face contacts with the owners, companies and organisations. HAMK tracks the number of projects and the obtained funding. HAMK stated that comparing and analysing the feedback from partners is challenging, as they represent a large variety of different viewpoints. This could signal a lack of resources for handling the feedback, or a need for developing the feedback system. In the audit team's view, the sporadic procedures regarding societal impact and regional development work present challenges for HAMK. There appear to be some tools for following RDI work, whereas regional development work lacks systematic indicators and processes almost completely.

Staff's engagement with external partners should be supported systematically

The staff's role in societal impact and regional development work at HAMK is central. They participate actively in regional working groups, events and meetings, acting as a bridge between HAMK and its partners. HAMK relies heavily on these personal contacts but it is unclear who, if anyone, has the best knowledge about the staff's activities and connections. Participation in local groups also increases the workload, but HAMK's presence in them is essential. Teacher interviews revealed that too little time is allocated for networking, which is mainly done in staff's free time. This could be one reason why the number of business contacts varies so much between HAMK Schools and also why HAMK struggles to contact and connect with small and medium-size companies. The audit team advises HAMK to ensure equal and sufficient resources for networking for staff in all units. The audit team also recommends developing the quality system in a way that would provide suitable tools for following the staff's interaction with external partners.

The students' role in regional development is integrated to their studies in the form of projects, practical training, international exchanges and thesis work. Guidelines for all of these activities are found on HAMK's Intranet. HAMK's recommendation is for students to do all of the above in cooperation with companies. The interviews revealed that most students had found business contacts and practical training opportunities on their own, but expressed that HAMK does not offer enough contacts with local businesses.

In some degree programmes business and other employer representatives participate as guest speakers or visiting lecturers, but there were differences between campuses and programmes in this practice. The audit team proposes developing quality tools to monitor whether all units reach comparable levels of partner and business representation. This is important in order to ensure that students have equal opportunities for contacting the surrounding working life.

While HAMK has some indicators for following the employment rates of graduating students (required for UAS funding), the interest shown towards students appears to fade after graduation. A concrete example of this is the lack of alumni work. It was found to be weak in the previous FINHEEC audit in 2011, and the current audit did not find any systematic action taken at HAMK to improve alumni work. In some HAMK Schools alumni had been involved in education and student co-operation, but this was not supported by systematic procedures. The audit team recommends acknowledging and utilising the potential of HAMK alumni, which could have the additional benefit of improving business cooperation, given that many students decide to stay in the region after graduation.

Stakeholders involved in quality work are active – attracting new stakeholders is a challenge

HAMK wants to be the bridge between education and business life in its operating region. The self-evaluation report stated that stakeholder representatives are involved in drafting the strategy and key operating plans, and they are also represented on HAMK's Advisory Board. Most stakeholder participants are very active according to the interviews of stakeholders and

management; however, it was also apparent that there are difficulties in engaging new stakeholders in board work, especially from small and medium-size companies. The stakeholder representatives did not express great interest toward quality data, but they were interested in helping HAMK achieve its full potential – after all, it would benefit the businesses in the area as well. This could be a sign that a new approach is needed, involving a wider range of stakeholders – both big and small – in quality work. Also innovating new ways of engaging busy business representatives in strategic planning could be beneficial for HAMK.

Support Services for societal impact and regional development need strengthening

The audit material stated that HAMK has aimed to involve its partners in quality management as extensively as possible. The interviews left some doubt as to whether there are enough tools or resources to do this. There are three people working in Business Services and teachers are networking in their own time or in addition to their daily work, while multiple students voiced hopes for more business contacts. The current resources may not be enough to cover the large region in which HAMK operates. In addition, the difficulties in engaging stakeholder parties in quality work suggest that the quality tools are insufficient and lack the right indicators on this topic.

HAMK Global Education Business

The quality management procedures of HAMK Global Education Business (GEB) are in place through use of the PDCA cycle but are insufficiently developed to support this activity. The procedures do not fully support the achievement of HAMK's strategic goals set for the GEB. The information provided by the quality system is as yet insufficient for the development of the GEB. The relationship between GEB and the wider internationalisation agenda and objectives has not yet been articulated, which will have an impact on the division of responsibilities and identification of future priorities. Staff, students and external stakeholders are only partially aware of GEB as many are neither involved in it nor associated with quality work. The quality management of key Support Services connected to the GEB is not sufficiently integrated.

*The quality management of the optional audit target HAMK Global Education Business is at an **emerging** stage.*

Global Education Business seeks to export HAMK's expertise to the international arena

HAMK selected Global Education as its optional audit target to emphasise the business operation aspect of its internationalisation agenda. The Global Education Business activity which started in 2014 consists of three interlinked elements: business operations; a service; and the associated products and product development.

Internationalisation is one of the primary aspects of the HAMK Strategy 2020 with goals related to cooperation in research projects with its strategic partners, an increase in systematic student, staff and researcher mobility, linking to the internationalisation of the region through degree programmes taught in English, and the export of expertise, HAMK's Global Education Business. According to HAMK's self-evaluation report, the objectives of Global Education Business in the Strategy 2020 are that "the export of expertise becomes a central part of HAMK's operations, has expanded and become digital, and is cost effective."

Professional teacher education is a pilot field for developing GEB procedures

HAMK Global Education Business activity is still in the development phase, as mentioned in the self-evaluation report and interviews of the staff working in GEB. The pilot field of the Global Education Business is professional teacher education, and the current, typical paying international customer is a foreign government's education administrator, ministry of education or funding programme coordinated by such bodies. This is a consequence of the national regulatory environment, which has a significant impact on HAMK's goal setting. National legislation did not allow for fees to be charged to individual international degree students so as a consequence HAMK Global Education Business has to date focused on non-degree work or sales of programmes to groups through a joint funding mechanism.

A first draft of a new strategy for Global Education Business and an updated development plan to deliver on the HAMK Strategy 2020 goals for internationalisation was going to be considered by the HAMK Board following the audit visit and was not available to the audit team making it challenging to form recommendations.

HAMK's self-evaluation report described the importance of drawing on the reputation for excellence and expertise of the Professional Education staff in delivering education business, coupled with the need to customise operations and systems in different contexts and units. Several interviews with staff reinforced this. A multiplicity of HAMK advisory and steering groups is involved in or contributes to the delivery and quality and risk management of different aspects of global business operations. The audit team agreed that there is a lack of clarity over management structures and roles and responsibilities of staff involved. The balance between centralisation and decentralisation of functions and responsibilities for education business strategy, management and operations and its relationship with other internationalisation objectives does not appear to have been fully addressed and should be clarified.

While Schools already have their own Global Education Business plans, a HAMK-wide business plan is part of the strategy development activity, according to the interviewees. Building the international profile and reputation of HAMK is a key aim emphasised by top management. A HAMK-wide business plan, identifying corporate priorities and facilitating the coordination of activity and quality management across the institution will be important not simply in contributing to managing the recognised financial risks in education business, but also in managing potential reputational risks to the institution. Such risks could result from failure in the quality of a single activity, programme or School and affect the institution as a whole.

The role of GEB in HAMK's wider internationalisation goals needs clarification

HAMK had selected Global Education as its optional audit target but the self-evaluation report referred to Global Education Business and the Strategy 2020 to "the export of expertise." The terms were used interchangeably in interviews without any single definition. In addition, a relationship between GEB and other internationalisation objectives in the Strategy 2020 was not articulated in the self-evaluation report. It was not clear from discussions as to how far Global Education

Business was primarily a business activity with international clients, hence a matter for the Fee-Based Services Steering Group, as opposed to an integral element of the HAMK internationalisation agenda contributing to the delivery of other aspects such as student mobility and a matter for quality management by International Affairs. This is an issue for HAMK to address in terms of clarifying purposes and goals in the internationalisation strategy and related indicators to demonstrate the inter-relationship between different activities and actors.

External stakeholders in the region and others interviewed, however, did not differentiate between internationalisation and GEB possibly because they did not see any boundaries or were not specifically engaged in business activity. They welcomed HAMK's capacity for international projects and, for some, a contribution to the internationalisation of their own activities, for example, through the School of Professional Education's Brazilian GEB 'alumni' returning for short work placements in local secondary schools.

A significant percentage (80%) of international students at HAMK are from outside the European Union and the audit team learned that one of the factors for choosing to study at HAMK was the absence of tuition fees. During the audit period the Finnish government position on charging fees to international students changed with the mandatory introduction of fees from September 2017.

The risk to recruitment to degrees taught in English from the introduction of fees was acknowledged in interviews. Although HAMK had established a cross UAS team to plan for the introduction of fees, which was cooperating with a national team working on the issue, it was viewed as an entirely separate issue from education business activities. The prohibition of charging individual student fees had, however, previously defined HAMK education business customer selections, quality work and the development of services and products for business operations, as mentioned in the self-evaluation report. Although there was considerable overlap in the provenance of current business education clients and many international students being from oil-based economies currently experiencing economic decline, any potential impact on education business arising from the impact of changes to fees did not appear to have been considered.

The staff's approach to GEB delivery positive – still need for competence development

Staff involved in delivering Global Education Business have developed a customer-orientated approach to service delivery and reported excellent feedback to date from clients including evidence of positive impact for them. This practice of a customer-focused approach could be shared more widely across HAMK especially in the context of the introduction of tuition fees for international students, which could change relationships and expectations in terms of level of services and quality.

HAMK is aware of gaps in staff competence and confidence to deliver Global Education Business. The audit team noted that competence requirements for staff roles in internationalisation were being developed and that staff would be evaluated through the Stara system to assess their competency level, which would then inform personal development plans. There had been a period from 2011–2014 of assessing competence in and supporting development of the English language skills of

staff involved in teaching programmes in English. From interviews with several different groups of students and staff it appeared that further support or remedial action on this issue was required for staff involved in internationalisation activities, whether Global Education Business or other.

The audit team recommends that agreement on development goals and associated actions in internationalisation and Global Education Business clarifying strategic priorities, management structures, roles and responsibilities, and identifying targets and indicators that determine when goals have been reached should be an urgent priority for HAMK action.

The quality system does not sufficiently support unique challenges of GEB

Global Education Business operations challenge some of HAMK's standard systems and procedures in part because of the different expectations and requirements of clients outside Finland. While the PDCA cycle is used and has been found useful by the GEB team, the need for solutions to new situations, such as how to certificate non-degree achievements, had been met demonstrating flexibility and adaptability and a willingness across the institution to support new activities. However, any accumulation of ad hoc solutions to new issues raised by GEB should be monitored as a potential risk to undermining consistency in the application of the institution's quality system. It may also be the case that the need for ad hoc solutions identifies gaps or areas for improvement in general of the quality system and its operation.

Feedback from clients is a major source of information on the quality and success of education business activities along with the follow-up by the Steering Group for Business Activities in respect of costs and profitability. The audit team noted from the self-evaluation report that the Steering Group for Fee-Based Services is still finding its shape and the productivity of its activities is difficult to evaluate. The audit team also noted from the self-evaluation report that a significant range of information instruments specific to business education was in development, including criteria for defining key customers, partners and products and the verification of quality and risk management. Presumably, this is being attended to in discussions with the Board, but it is a key indicator that systematising the full range of quality work in this domain is still a work in progress.

Information on GEB can be exchanged in a working space for Global Education in the Intranet as well as through the Global Education Team meetings, but there is acknowledgement that this "does not necessarily spread effectively and cover the entire set of actors in HAMK." The audit team recommends that Support Services staff should be included in this group of actors. There currently appears to be limited opportunity for a wide range of Support Services staff to participate formally in internationalisation activity, even though their contribution to success could be critical. Staff development activities should include Support Services staff.

While full-time students are not involved in GEB activities, from the interviews the audit team found that there is interest in internationalisation activities. Students wanted more opportunities including international elements in their courses, different possibilities for student exchange and double degrees including at the Master's level. Some of this raises issues around the capacity of the current range of HAMK's partners to support the internationalisation agenda.

There is not a separate Guideline on Global Education Business but the Guideline on Business Activities supports GEB. Depending on the nature of the HAMK-related business plan and the revised development plan for internationalisation, HAMK should consider whether a separate guideline is necessary to ensure consistency of approach across the units and the institution or whether existing guidelines need revision in the light of the plan.

The quality system as a whole

The quality system of Häme University of Applied Sciences has a longstanding guidelines-based history providing for consistency in quality management across a multi-campus institution combined with a new participatory development approach to support the implementation of its strategic plan and associated operations. The quality system, the basis of which is the PDCA cycle, is well-functioning for all the core duties of the institution, in particular for degree education. There are however areas in need of improvement including information dissemination, the development of indicators and systematisation of the participation of stakeholders in RDI and regional development work in HAMK's quality work. Actions taken by the institution as a result of evaluations and feedback provide evidence that the system has an impact on the further development of operations and core duties. Quality culture is embedded in the daily way of working at the institution with a firm focus on student-centredness and leadership-based on transparency and engagement to foster organisational development and change.

*The quality system as a whole is at a **developing** stage.*

8.1 Comprehensiveness and impact of the quality system

HAMK's current quality system comprises a longstanding use of quality guidelines combined with a new participatory approach to development and planning. The quality system, especially through the use of the institution wide guidelines, ensures consistency in quality management and the delivery of teaching and learning across a multi-campus, multi-location institution. The quality system supports the implementation of the Strategy 2020 as far as indicators and development plans for individual aims and objectives have been developed, but there is still work outstanding in this area including in relation to internationalisation and Global Education Business. Through the use of the guidelines equity of treatment of students is achieved across and throughout the institution.

All core duties of the institution are covered by the quality system with the most noticeable impact of quality management procedures to be found in the planning, implementation and development of degree education. The cooperative processes inside HAMK's degree education

also include several good practices. The audit team had a robust impression of the presence of a deeply embedded quality culture during the audit interviews. In degree education this culminated in the question of the real use of HAMK's quality guidelines and the PDCA cycle. It is evident that the guidelines successfully frame all degree education. This particular uniformity is a major strength for HAMK. The use of HAMK's quality guidelines permeates all of the samples of degree education and defines the HAMK quality standard for education activities. Evidence of some unevenness in impact was found especially in the areas of RDI, societal impact and regional development work. While feedback from stakeholders about the quality of HAMK's services and products in these areas was good, there was often little knowledge of or engagement in HAMK's quality work. Students expressed keen interest to know more about and to participate in these areas, which could be more fully integrated into their degree education.

The PDCA cycle continues to be the main driver of the quality system and the aspect with which all staff most clearly identified in the delivery and evaluation of their work. The more complex relationship, at least in terms of trying to describe it, was between elements of the system including the relationship with quality management. As new strategic objectives are introduced, the quality system needs to evolve to cope rather than simply doing more of the same. Further simplification of the quality system, which includes a very large number of steering groups, is advisable.

A notable strength of the quality system is the range and intensity of communication and information channels and tools within the institution to serve strategic management needs and engage staff and students in quality development. From unannounced walk-in visits to units and campuses by the Rector and Board members and Rector's hearings to the increasingly sophisticated Business Intelligence tools including the Stara system and the use of Yammer for student feedback and response, there is a clear and consistent push towards ensuring constant and up-to-date communication with and between students and staff. An impact of this is the recognition by students that their voices are heard and that they can influence the development and delivery of their programmes. However, while students are represented on the Board and in steering groups, galvanising their more active engagement with the quality system to strengthen their input to development processes beyond feedback on courses remains a challenge for the institution.

A theme that emerged across several audit interviews was the need to improve the consistency and intensity of engagement with external stakeholders and partners in a range of activities in order to deliver fully on objectives relating in particular to improvement of RDI, societal impact and regional development work. This was one of several areas where attention to staff workload generated by quality management processes is identified as something to which the institution should pay attention.

The institution was aware of the need to refine staff competences in light of the introduction of new areas of activity including internationalisation, which was a work in progress in the Stara system. The importance of ensuring that all staff have development opportunities is a significant factor in realising some of the strategic agenda. Such development activities should be inclusive, involving Support Services staff.

The development of the revised Strategy 2020 and the introduction of the new study models was evidence of the effectiveness of the quality system, which had identified the need for change.

8.2 Quality culture

HAMK's approach to quality culture is one of transparency and participation. An aspect of transparency is the visibility not only of student feedback in the Intranet on their courses and other aspects of life at HAMK, but also the action taken in response. While the term quality culture is not one commonly used within the institution, the culture is strong. Quality work is not seen as separate from daily operational work as the PDCA cycle is so firmly embedded.

As mentioned above the existence of guidelines, the internal information systems but also the participatory leadership approach are factors that have created a common understanding of quality work and a climate of openness in the institution. The participatory approach creates shared responsibility for quality work in development, delivery, evaluation and action on results and provides an empowering means of sustaining successful organisational development and change.

8.3 The quality system as a whole

HAMK is going through a period of significant challenge and change, some of which has been generated by internal action, notably the introduction of new study models. As described above, however, HAMK provided evidence of well operating and comprehensive system of quality management procedures to support its revised strategic aims and objectives articulated in Strategy 2020, as well as all aspects of its core duties. The institution addresses and makes good use of a range of both external performance indicators, notably those of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and internal indicators in development plans, workbooks, and the Stara system to evaluate progress and development needs. The PDCA cycle is used across and throughout the institution as well as the guidelines. A notable strength of the system is the development of digitised internal information channels and systems, which contribute to bringing together the distributed institution ensuring that everyone has access to information at the same time.

The optional audit target – Global Education (Business) – which is an element in the institution's internationalisation agenda needs further consideration and development particularly in relation to other international objectives. There is however much to be learned from the customer-focused approach adopted in GEB and the leverage of national and institutional reputation for excellence in delivering vocational teacher education to attract international clients.

The audit team appreciated the cooperative and constructive way in which HAMK provided evidence of the effectiveness of the quality system. The audit team confirmed that the objectives set for the quality system have been met.

9.1 Strengths and good practices of the quality system

Strengths

- Quality culture is deeply embedded in HAMK's ways of working, especially in degree education.
- Staff are strongly committed to the guidelines, ensuring consistency of operations across campuses and units, including equality in the treatment of students.
- A systematic focus on student interests is central to the quality of the learning environment. The audit visit provided evidence that the student-centred approach is the predominant paradigm rising from HAMK Strategy 2020 and implemented in the work of the teaching staff across the institution.
- The systematic and goal-orientated ways of working, supplemented by genuine continuous implementation of the PDCA cycle as well as a daily culture of planning and feedback-gathering are strengths for HAMK.
- The quality system – especially the PDCA cycle – supports the constant development of HAMK's degree education and the reformed study models. Domestic and international students are satisfied with the quality culture at HAMK, especially in degree education.
- Information systems on the Intranet are useful and largely used especially in the quality management of degree education.
- Strong utilisation of Business Intelligence tools and continuous development of digital systems are strengths in HAMK's quality management. Business Intelligence combines several organisational functions such as business process development, quality control, centralised data integration, advanced identity intelligence, process automation and business intelligence.
- The HAMK quality system has well-established and systematic procedures for regularly evaluating and developing the system as a whole.
- The quality system identifies the need for new staff competences arising from new activities such as the Global Education Business.

Good practices

- A good practice recognised in HAMK is of top management and HAMK Board members making unannounced, surprise visits to various units and campuses of HAMK for direct contact and fact-checking, serving the needs of strategic management. This was seen as a useful custom especially at the time of implementing a new strategy – Strategy 2020 – and simultaneously launching the reformed study model system.
- The environment reviews presented by the Rector at every Board meeting, annual Rector’s hearings for staff and students, and the Rector’s quarterly meetings with HAMK’s Student Union HAMKO exemplify good practices of maintaining coherent communication between various interest groups of the HAMK community and strengthening the advanced quality culture of the institution.
- HAMK encourages and supports staff in promoting pedagogical innovations for student-centred learning environments.
- The Master’s Programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship has a steering/ advisory group, which comprises representatives of businesses in the region. The group participates in the development of the programme’s curriculum. This systematises cooperation with employers and stakeholders and is a well-functioning practice recommended for all HAMK degree programmes.
- In the last couple of years, HAMK’s internal digital material has been transferred to a SharePoint environment on the Intranet, introducing a more versatile and interactive online work environment. The use of social media tools (especially Yammer) has enabled interactive discussions and dissemination of information on quality work. Some of the work associated with quality management takes place on electronic workspaces, which are mobile and independent of physical location.
- Leveraging outcomes from Global Education Business to contribute to domestic reputation and regional activities, such as the use of ‘alumni’ from GEB programmes in local schools, is a good practice, which is worth developing.

9.2 Recommendations

- The audit team encourages HAMK to improve staff development to support the implementation of the HAMK Strategy 2020. HAMK should also arrange more training and staff development activities for the personnel in degree programmes to support strategy-driven development.
- The audit team recommends HAMK to communicate the big picture of the quality policy and quality system to the HAMK community and beyond.
- The audit team advises HAMK to engage effectively and systematically with stakeholders in defining and enhancing their role in HAMK’s quality work.
- For regional development work, HAMK relies heavily on personal contacts. The audit team encourages HAMK to develop a comprehensive overview of these activities and systematise the roles of the actors in this field.
- There should be clearer articulation of the link between the quality system and risk management outcomes within the operations of the Quality and Risk Management Steering Group.

- HAMK could support students to be more effective and visible in their contribution to quality work beyond feedback. The Student Union HAMKO could have a more prominent role in these activities.
- There is a large number of boards and steering groups at HAMK. The staff's workload from quality management activities and strategy-driven development activities should be evaluated and monitored regularly. The number of boards and groups and the relationships between them should be reviewed.
- The international students interviewed at HAMK would welcome more business life contacts. New methods for introducing the students to local businesses are needed. International students should be made aware of how they could use the activities of the HAMK Business Services office as part of their studies.
- HAMK should concentrate on clarifying the roles and relationships in and the boundaries of Global Education Business and its relationship with other internationalisation activities.

9.3 The audit team's overall assessment

The quality system of Häme University of Applied Sciences fulfils the FINEEC criteria for the quality system as a whole and for the quality management as it relates to the core duties. None of the audit targets are at the absent stage and the quality system as a whole (audit target 6) is at the developing stage.

The audit team proposes to the FINEEC Higher Education Evaluation Committee that Häme University of Applied Sciences passes the audit.

9.4 Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision

In its meeting on 26 August 2016, the Higher Education Evaluation Committee decided, based on the proposal and report of the audit team, that the quality system of Häme University of Applied Sciences meets the FINEEC criteria for quality systems as a whole and quality management of the higher education institution's core duties. Häme University of Applied Sciences has been awarded a quality label that is valid for six years beginning on 26 August 2016.

APPENDIX 1. Table of audit targets and criteria

TARGETS	CRITERIA			
	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
1. Quality policy	<p>The quality policy shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rationale and definition of the quality system's objectives and responsibilities • accessibility of the quality policy to internal and external stakeholders • linking to the institution's overall strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality policy's rationale, objectives and division of responsibilities are at an early stage of development and are only partially defined. • The quality policy is not fully accessible and does not sufficiently take into account the information needs of internal and external stakeholders. • The quality policy is insufficiently linked to the institution's overall strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality policy's rationale, objectives and division of responsibilities are clearly defined and the result of an inclusive process. • The quality policy is accessible to all internal and external stakeholders, taking their information needs into account. • The quality policy is clearly linked to the institution's overall strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality policy's rationale, objectives and division of responsibilities are defined in explicit terms and the result of a thorough and wide process. • The quality policy is accessible and actively communicated to all internal and external stakeholders. • The quality policy is an integral part of the institution's overall strategy.

TARGETS

CRITERIA

	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
<p>2. Quality system's link with strategic management</p>	<p>The quality system and quality work show an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ability to meet the information needs of strategic and operations management • procedures for the use and communication of quality information • functionality at different organisational levels • division of responsibility • commitment in the execution of roles and responsibilities in the institution's quality work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality system and the information it produces serve only partially the needs of strategic and operations management. • Procedures for the use of and communication of quality information are weak or uneven. • The quality system functions unevenly across the institution. • The division of responsibility is only partially effective, with variable commitment in the execution of roles and responsibilities in the institution's quality work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality system and the information it produces serve strategic and operations management. • Established procedures ensure that the information produced is put to use and communicated systematically within the institution and to external stakeholders. • The system works evenly across different organisational levels and units. • The division of responsibility is effective, and roles and responsibilities in the institution's quality work are executed with commitment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institution has well-established and excellent procedures that systematically produce information for strategic needs, and the information is put to systematic and wide use. • The institution has well-established and excellent procedures for communicating information to different personnel groups, students and external stakeholders. Communication of the information is active and up-to-date. • The quality system works effectively across all organisational levels, in a way that adds value to and enhances the quality of the institution's operations. • Managers and members of the community are committed to enhancement and the embedding of a quality culture.

TARGETS

CRITERIA

	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
3. Development of the quality system	<p>The HEI shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> procedures for evaluating or developing the quality system or overall view of the functioning of the quality system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The institution has in place procedures for evaluating and developing the quality system but these procedures may not always be fit for purpose and/or effectively used for the system's further development. Institutional oversight of the functioning of the quality system needs to be strengthened. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HEI has in place well-functioning procedures to evaluate and develop the quality system. The institution is able to identify the system's strengths and areas in need of development, and development work is systematic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HEI has well-established and systematic procedures for regularly evaluating and developing the system. The institution is able to efficiently identify the system's strengths and areas in need of development. There is clear evidence of the system's successful development work.
<i>Follow-up section for the HEIs subject to the second audit:</i>	<p>The HEI shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development work following the first audit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the quality system after the first audit has not been systematic or effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the quality system after the first audit has been systematic. The system works better than before. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the first audit, the HEI has systematically improved the functionality and fitness for purpose of the quality system. Special attention has been given to the workload produced by the system. The system has been developed in a successful and effective manner.

The fulfilment of the following criteria is reviewed separately for each core duty and optional audit target:

TARGETS

CRITERIA

	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
<p>4. Quality management of the core duties, including essential services supporting these</p> <p>4a) Degree education</p> <p>4b) Research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities</p> <p>4c) Societal impact and regional development work (incl. social responsibility, continuing education, open university and open university of applied sciences education, as well as paid-services education)</p> <p>4d) Optional audit target</p>	<p>The quality system shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality management procedures used to achieve the goals set for the core duties • participation of the institution's personnel groups, students or external stakeholders in quality work related to the core duties • quality management of essential services supporting the core duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures are in place but insufficiently developed. The procedures do not fully support the achievement of institutional strategic goals set for the core duties. • The information provided by the quality system is as yet insufficient for the development of the core duties. Information use is sporadic and/or information collection is an end in itself. • Personnel groups, students and external stakeholders are only partially involved in quality work. • The quality management of key support services is not functional. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional quality management procedures advance the development of the institution's core duties and the achievement of goals set for the operations. • The quality system produces relevant information for the development of the core duties, and the information is used for this purpose. • Personnel groups and students are involved in quality work. External stakeholders also participate. • The quality management of key support services functions relatively well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI has systematic and well-established quality management procedures that provide excellent support for the development of the institution's core duties and the implementation of its overall strategy. • The institution has systematic and excellent procedures used to produce information for the development of the core duties. There is clear evidence that information is used systematically and successfully. • Personnel groups and students are committed and actively involved in quality work. Special attention has been given to the workload generated by the quality management procedures. External stakeholders are also systematically involved in quality work. • The HEI has systematic and well-established procedures for the quality management of key support services. There is clear evidence that these procedures function well.

The fulfilment of the following criteria is reviewed separately for each degree programme:

TARGETS	CRITERIA		
	Absent	Emerging	Developing
<p>5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes</p> <p>Planning of the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricula and their preparation • Intended learning outcomes and their definition • Links between research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities, and education • Lifelong learning • Relevance of degrees to working life. <p>Implementation of the programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching methods and learning environments • Methods used to assess learning • Students' learning and well-being • Teachers' competence and occupational well-being. <p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of different personnel groups, students and external stakeholders in quality work related to the degree programme. <p>Effectiveness of quality work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability of key evaluation methods and follow-up indicators and their impact on the achievement of goals. 	<p>The quality system shows an absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality management procedures related to the planning of the programme • quality management procedures related to the implementation of the programme • participation of the institution's personnel groups, students or external stakeholders in the development of the programme or • effectiveness of the quality work related to the programme. 	<p>The quality management procedures related to the planning of educational provision are not fully functional and do not provide sufficient support to the planning of the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures related to the implementation of educational provision are not fully functional and do not provide sufficient support to the implementation of the programme. • Personnel groups, students and external stakeholders only partially participate in quality work. • There is little evidence of the effectiveness of the quality work related to the programme. 	<p>The quality management procedures related to the planning of educational provision are fully functional and support the planning of the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures related to the implementation of educational provision provide excellent support for the implementation of the programme. They are systematic and well-established. • The quality management procedures related to the implementation of educational provision provide excellent support for the implementation of the programme. They are systematic and well-established. • Personnel groups and students participate actively in quality work. External stakeholders are also systematically involved. • There is clear evidence of the enhancement effect of the quality work.

TARGETS

CRITERIA

	Absent	Emerging	Developing	Advanced
<p>6. The quality system as a whole</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HEI has only individual and unrelated quality management procedures. • There is no evidence of the procedures' impact on the development of the operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures do not yet form a functioning and unified system. • The quality system encompasses some of the HEI's core duties but there is little evidence of the system's impact on the development of the core duties. • The institution's quality culture is only just emerging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures constitute a functioning system. • The quality system covers the essential parts of the core duties of the HEI and provides support for the development of the operations. There is evidence that the system has an impact on the development of the core duties. • The development of the operations is based on an existing quality culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality management procedures form a dynamic and coherent system. • The quality system covers all the core duties of the HEI and provides excellent support for the institution's overall strategy and the development of the operations. There is clear evidence that the system has an impact on the development of the core duties. • The institution has a well-established quality culture, characterised by wide participation, commitment and transparency.

APPENDIX 2. The stages and timetable of the audit process

Agreement negotiation between the HEI and FINEEC	Spring 2015
Appointment of the audit team	October 2015
Submission of the audit material and self-evaluation report	December 2015
Information and discussion event at the HEI	19 January 2016
Audit visit	15–17 March 2016
Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision on the result	26 August 2016
Publication of the report	August 2016
Concluding seminar	October 2016
Follow-up on the development work of the quality system	2019

APPENDIX 3. Programme of the audit visit

Tuesday 15 March 2016	
09.00–10.00	Interview of the Top management
10.10–10.50	Interview of the HAMK Board
11.00–11.50	Interview of Deans and FUAS representative
12.00–13.00	Lunch
13.00–13.50	Interview of Directors of research units
14.00–14.50	Interview of Finnish students, group A
14.00–14.50	Interview of international students, group B
15.00–15.50	Interview of the Quality management
16.00–16.50	Interview of external stakeholders
Wednesday 16 March 2016	
09.00–09.50	Thematic interview on Societal impact and regional development work
10.00–10.50	Interview of staff of the Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering
11.00–11.50	Interview of students of the Degree Programme in Electrical and Automation Engineering
12.00–13.00	Lunch
13.00–13.50	Interview of staff of the Master's Programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship
14.00–14.50	Interview of students of the Master's Programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship
15.00–15.50	Interview of staff of the Degree Programme in Design
16.00–16.50	Interview of students of the Degree Programme in Design
Thursday 17 March 2016	
09.00–09.50	Thematic interview on Staff development
10.00–10.50	Thematic interview on Global Education Business
11.00–11.50	Interview of the Support Services staff
12.00–13.15	Lunch
13.15–14.15	Interview of the Top management
15.00–15.15	Preliminary feedback to the Top management

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) is an independent, national evaluation agency responsible for the external evaluations of education from early childhood education to higher education in Finland. It implements system and thematic evaluations, learning outcome evaluations and field-specific evaluations. Moreover, FINEEC supports providers of education and training and higher education institutions in matters related to evaluation and quality assurance, as well as advances the evaluation of education.

Audits of the quality systems of higher education institutions have been implemented in Finland in accordance with the principle of enhancement-led evaluation since 2005. The objective of the audits has been to support Finnish institutions in developing quality systems that correspond to the European principles of quality assurance and to demonstrate that functional and consistent quality assurance procedures are in place in Finland both in institutions and on the national level. In the audits, institutions are supported in their efforts to reach their strategic objectives and in directing future development activities in order to create a framework for the institutions' continuous development.

This report presents the audit process of Häme University of Applied Sciences and the results of the audit.

ISBN 978-952-206-363-2 (pb)
ISBN 978-952-206-364-9 (pdf)

ISSN 2342-4176 (Painettu)
ISSN 2342-4184 (Verkkojulkaisu)
ISSN-L 2342-4176



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