



# RE-AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TURKU 2017

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# Abstract

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**Authors**

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The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre has conducted a re-audit of University of Turku and has awarded the University a quality label that is valid for six years from 16 June 2017. The quality system of the University of Turku 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.

In the initial audit conducted in 2014-2015 the University of Turku did not meet the national audit criteria. The development of the quality system required action from the institution and a re-audit. The re-audit focused on the following audit targets:

- Development of the quality system
- Societal impact and regional development work
- The quality system as a whole.

The audit team considers that the University of Turku has made substantial progress in developing the quality system since the initial audit. The University has taken several initiatives that have improved the functioning, comprehensiveness and transparency of the quality system.

The University has developed the quality system parallel to the renewal of the strategy of the University. As a result, the new strategy is now closely linked to quality management. Simultaneously, the University has streamlined the annual planning and reporting system which has increased the uniformity and impact of quality management across the faculties and units. In addition to external evaluations, the Rector's visits to units and internal evaluations support development work and enhancement of quality. Additionally, the revised quality manual and intranet have improved the transparency and communicativeness of the quality system within the entire university community.

The University of Turku has taken a significantly improved the quality management of societal interaction and integrated it as a part of the quality system. This work has been supported by a development programme, strengthening of societal interaction in organisational structures and the involvement of external stakeholders in development work more than earlier. Feedback from external stakeholders has had a positive impact for instance on the strategy of the University and curriculum development. Students are supported in their career planning by a well-functioning mentoring programme. The adoption of advisory boards in all faculties is an important initiative to further develop communication with external stakeholders.

The quality culture at the University of Turku is characterised by its openness, mutual trust and communication. Internal communication has been supported by the rectorate's visits to the units and Rector's regular meetings with the Student Union representatives. Based on an inclusive strategy preparation process, the staff is highly aware of common strategic goals and are strongly committed to them.

The University is committed to utilising external feedback and has systematically developed the quality system based on results of the initial audit. The University has solid plans in place on how to develop the quality system further. The audit team encourages the University of Turku to continue the development of quality management based on its own goals and needs.

**Keywords**

Audit, evaluation, higher education institutions, quality, quality management, quality system, re-audit, university

# Tiivistelmä

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## **Julkaisija**

Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus

## **Julkaisun nimi**

Re-audit of University of Turku 2017 (Turun yliopiston uusinta-auditointi 2017)

## **Tekijät**

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Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus on toteuttanut Turun yliopiston uusinta-auditoinnin ja antanut korkeakoululle laatuleiman, joka on voimassa kuusi vuotta 16.6.2017 alkaen. Turun yliopiston laatujärjestelmä täyttää korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnalle asetetut kansalliset kriteerit ja vastaa eurooppalaisia korkeakoulujen laadunhallinnan periaatteita ja suosituksia.

Turun yliopiston auditointi toteutettiin vuosien 2014–2015 aikana. Varsinaisessa auditoinnissa Turun yliopisto ei täyttänyt kansallisia auditointikriteereitä. Laatujärjestelmän kehittäminen edellytti korkeakoululta toimenpiteitä ja uusinta-auditointia. Uusinta-auditointi kohdistui seuraaviin auditointikohteisiin:

- Laatujärjestelmän kehittäminen
- Yhteiskunnallinen vaikuttavuus ja aluekehitystyö
- Laatujärjestelmän kokonaisuus.

Auditointiryhmän mukaan Turun yliopisto on kehittänyt laatujärjestelmäänsä merkittäväällä tavalla varsinaisen auditoinnin jälkeen. Yliopisto on toteuttanut useita toimenpiteitä, joiden tuloksena sen laatujärjestelmän toimivuus, kattavuus ja läpinäkyvyys ovat parantuneet.

Yliopisto kehitti laatujärjestelmäänsä ja uudisti strategiansa rinnakkain. Tämän tuloksena uusi strategia ja laatujärjestelmä ovat nyt tiiviisti kytkeytyneet toisiinsa. Samalla yliopisto virtaviivaisti toiminnan suunnittelu- ja raportointijärjestelmän, mikä on lisännyt laadunhallinnan yhtenäisyyttä yli tiedekuntien ja yksiköiden. Ulkoisten arviointien ohella rehtorin yksikkövierailut ja sisäiset arvioinnit tukevat kehittämistyötä ja laadun kehittämistä. Lisäksi uudistettu laatukäsikirja ja intranet ovat parantaneet laatujärjestelmän läpinäkyvyyttä ja viestivyyttä koko yliopistoyhteisössä.

Turun yliopisto on merkittävästi parantanut yhteiskunnallisen vuorovaikutuksen laadunhallintaa ja liittänyt sen osaksi laatujärjestelmää. Tätä työtä ovat tukeneet yhteiskunnallisen vuorovaikutuksen kehittämisohjelma, useat organisatoriset uudistukset ja ulkoisten sidosryhmien ottaminen mukaan aiempaa tiiviimmin kehittämistyöhön. Ulkoisten sidosryhmien palautteella on ollut myönteistä vaikutusta muun muassa yliopiston strategiaan ja opetussuunnitelmien kehittämiseen. Opiskelijoiden urasuunnittelua tuetaan hyvin toimivalla mentorointiohjelmalla. Neuvottelukuntien käyttöönotto kaikissa tiedekunnissa on tärkeä aloite vuorovaikutuksen lisäämiseksi ulkoisten sidosryhmien kanssa.

Turun yliopiston laatukulttuurille on ominaista avoimuus sekä keskinäinen luottamus ja vuorovaikutus. Yliopiston sisäistä vuoropuhelua ovat tukeneet rehtoraatin yksikkövierailut ja rehtorin säännölliset tapaamiset ylioppilaskunnan edustajien kanssa. Osallistavan strategian laadintaprosessin ansiosta henkilöstö on hyvin tietoinen yhteisistä strategista tavoitteista ja sitoutunut niihin vahvasti.

Yliopisto on sitoutunut käyttämään ulkoista palautetta toimintansa kehittämiseen ja on systemaattisesti kehittänyt laatujärjestelmäänsä varsinaisen auditoinnin palautteen pohjalta. Yliopistolla on selkeät suunnitelmat laatujärjestelmänsä jatkokehittämiseksi. Auditointiryhmä kannustaa Turun yliopistoa jatkamaan laadunhallinnan kehittämistä omien tavoitteidensa ja tarpeidensa pohjalta.

#### **Avainsanat**

Arviointi, auditointi, korkeakoulut, laadunhallinta, laatu, laatujärjestelmä, uusinta-auditointi, yliopisto

# Sammandrag

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## **Utgivare**

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering

## **Publikation**

Re-audit of University of Turku 2017 (Omauditering av Åbo universitet 2017)

## **Författare**

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& Marja-Liisa Saarilammi

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering har genomfört en omauditering av Åbo universitet och har beviljat högskolan en kvalitetsstämpel som gäller i sex år från och med den 20 juni 2017. Åbo universitets kvalitetssystem uppfyller de nationella kriterierna för kvalitetshantering som fastställts för högskolor och motsvarar de europeiska principerna för och rekommendationerna om högskolornas kvalitetshantering.

Åbo universitets auditering genomfördes under åren 2014–2015. Åbo universitet uppfyllde inte de nationella auditeringskriterierna i den egentliga auditeringen. Utvecklandet av kvalitetssystemet krävde åtgärder av högskolan och en omauditering. Omauditeringen fokuserade på följande auditeringsobjekt:

- Utvecklandet av kvalitetssystemet
- Genomslagskraft i samhället och regionutvecklingsarbete
- Kvalitetssystemet som helhet.

Enligt auditeringsgruppen har Åbo universitet på ett betydande sätt utvecklat dess kvalitetssystem sedan den egentliga auditeringen. Universitetet har vidtagit flera åtgärder som har resulterat i ett mer heltäckande och transparent kvalitetssystem som fungerar bättre.

Universitetet har utvecklat sitt kvalitetssystem och förnyat sin strategi som parallella processer. Som ett resultat av detta arbete är den nya strategin och kvalitetssystemet nu nära kopplade till varandra. Samtidigt har universitetet gjort systemet för verksamhetsplaneringen och -rapporteringen mer effektivt, vilket har gjort kvalitetshandlingen mer enhetligt över fakultets- och enhetsgränserna. Utöver de externa utvärderingarna, stöds utvecklingsarbetet och kvalitetsutvecklingen av rektorns besök till enheterna och genom de interna utvärderingarna. Dessutom har man förnyat kvalitetshandboken och intranätet, vilket har förbättrat transparensen i och kommunikationen gällande kvalitetssystemet i hela universitetsgemenskapen.



Åbo universitet har avsevärt förbättrat kvalitetshandlingen av samverkan med samhället, som nu är en del av kvalitetssystemet. Detta arbete har fått stöd av ett utvecklingsprogram för samverkan med samhället, flera organisatoriska förändringar och genom att man inkluderat externa intressenter i utvecklingsarbetet i större omfattning än tidigare. Responsen från externa intressenter har haft en positiv inverkan på bland annat universitetets strategi och utvecklingen av undervisningsplanerna. De studerandes karriärplanering stöds genom ett välfungerande mentorprogram. Ett viktigt initiativ för att öka samverkan med externa intressenter är att man har infört rådgivande nämnder vid alla fakulteter.

Öppenhet, ömsesidigt förtroende och växelverkan är utmärkande för kvalitetskulturen vid Åbo universitet. Den interna dialogen har stärkts genom att rektoratet har besökt enheterna och rektorn har haft regelbundna möten med representanter för studentkåren. Tack vare en delaktig strategiprocess är personalen väl förtrogen med de gemensamma strategiska målen och starkt engagerade i dem.

Universitetet har förbundit sig att använda extern respons för att utveckla sin verksamhet och har systematiskt utvecklat sitt kvalitetssystem utifrån responsen från den egentliga auditeringen. Universitetet har tydliga planer på hur kvalitetssystemet ska vidareutvecklas. Auditeringsgruppen uppmuntrar Åbo universitet att fortsätta att utveckla kvalitetshandlingen utifrån sina egna mål och behov.

### **Nyckelord**

Auditering, högskolor, kvalitet, kvalitetshandling, kvalitetssystem, omdöme, universitet, utvärdering

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# Re-audit targets and process

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## 1.1 Re-audit targets

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The initial audit of the University of Turku was conducted in 2014–2015. The target of the audit was the quality system that the University of Turku had developed on the basis of its own needs and goals. The focus of the audit was on the procedures and processes that the institution used to maintain, develop and enhance the quality of its operations. In accordance with the principle of enhancement-led evaluation, the higher education institution's (HEI) objectives and the content of its activities or results were not evaluated in the audit. The aim of audits is to help the HEI to identify strengths, good practices and areas in need of development in its own operations. The audits 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 Area (also known as the ESG).

The Higher Education Evaluation Committee decided at its meeting on 27 February 2015 that the quality system of the University of Turku did not meet the criteria set for quality systems. Based on the Committee's decision the re-audit focuses on the following auditing targets:

- Development of the quality system (Audit target 3),
- Societal impact and regional development work (Audit target 4c) and
- The quality system as a whole (audit target 6).

The same audit criteria are applied in the re-audit as in the initial audit. Therefore, the *Audit manual for the quality systems of higher education institutions 2011–2017* (FINHEEC 15:2012) was used in the re-audit of the University of Turku. In a re-audit, the institution is expected to present evidence showing that it has improved its quality system so that the audit targets evaluated in the re-audit have progressed to at least the 'developing' level defined in the audit criteria. The audit criteria are provided in Appendix 1.

## 1.2 Re-audit process

The re-audit is based on the material submitted by 14 February 2017, as well as an audit visit to the University of Turku on 11–12 April 2017. The audit team also had access to electronic materials that were important for quality management. The main phases and timeframe of the audit process are listed in Appendix 2.

An international audit team carried out the re-audit in English. The University of Turku was given the opportunity to comment on the team's composition, especially from the perspective of disqualification, prior to the appointment of the audit team.

The audit team:

**Jari Niemelä** Dean, Professor, University Helsinki, Finland (chair)

**Agneta Bladh**, Chair of the Swedish Research Council, Sweden (vice chair)

**Martin Galevski**, Doctoral Student in Education, University of Oxford, Macedonia

**Leena Sarvaranta**, Vice President, EU Affairs, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, Finland

The FINEEC staff members:

Counsellor of Evaluation **Sirpa Moitus** acted as the project manager for the re-audit and Counsellor of Evaluation **Marja-Liisa Saarilammi** acted as a backup for the project manager.

As noted, the audit team conducted a two-day audit visit to the institution. The purpose of the visit was to verify and supplement the observations made of the quality system in relation to the re-audit targets based on the audit material. The programme of the visit is shown in Appendix 3.

The audit team drew up this report based on the material gathered during the evaluation and on the analysis of that material. The audit team members produced the report jointly by drawing on the expertise of each team member. The University of Turku was given the opportunity to check the report for factual information prior to the Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision-making meeting.

# The organisation and quality system of the University of Turku

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## 2.1 Organisation of the University of Turku

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The University of Turku was established in 1920. It continues the academic traditions and history initiated by the Royal Academy of Turku, which was the first university of Finland, established in 1640. The University's founding years were an era of strong patriotism and Finland took its first steps as an independent country. This spirit can also be sensed in the motto of the University: *From a free people to free science and learning.*

As stipulated in the Universities Act (558/2009), the University of Turku is a university formed by the merger of the University of Turku and Turku School of Economics, which began operating on 1 January 2010 as a corporation under public law.

The basic mission of the University of Turku is to promote free research and academic education and to provide higher education based on research. In carrying out its mission, the University promotes lifelong learning and the impact of its research findings on society. When fulfilling its basic mission, the University works according to the values, aims and missions listed in its strategy.

Research and teaching at the University of Turku are organised into six faculties and the Turku School of Economics, which has the same status as the faculties:

- Faculty of Humanities
- Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
- Faculty of Medicine
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Social Sciences
- Faculty of Education
- Turku School of Economics.

The University of Turku organises education in three campuses: the main campus is located in Turku and two other campuses are located in the cities of Pori and Rauma.

The University of Turku also has seven independent units outside the faculties:

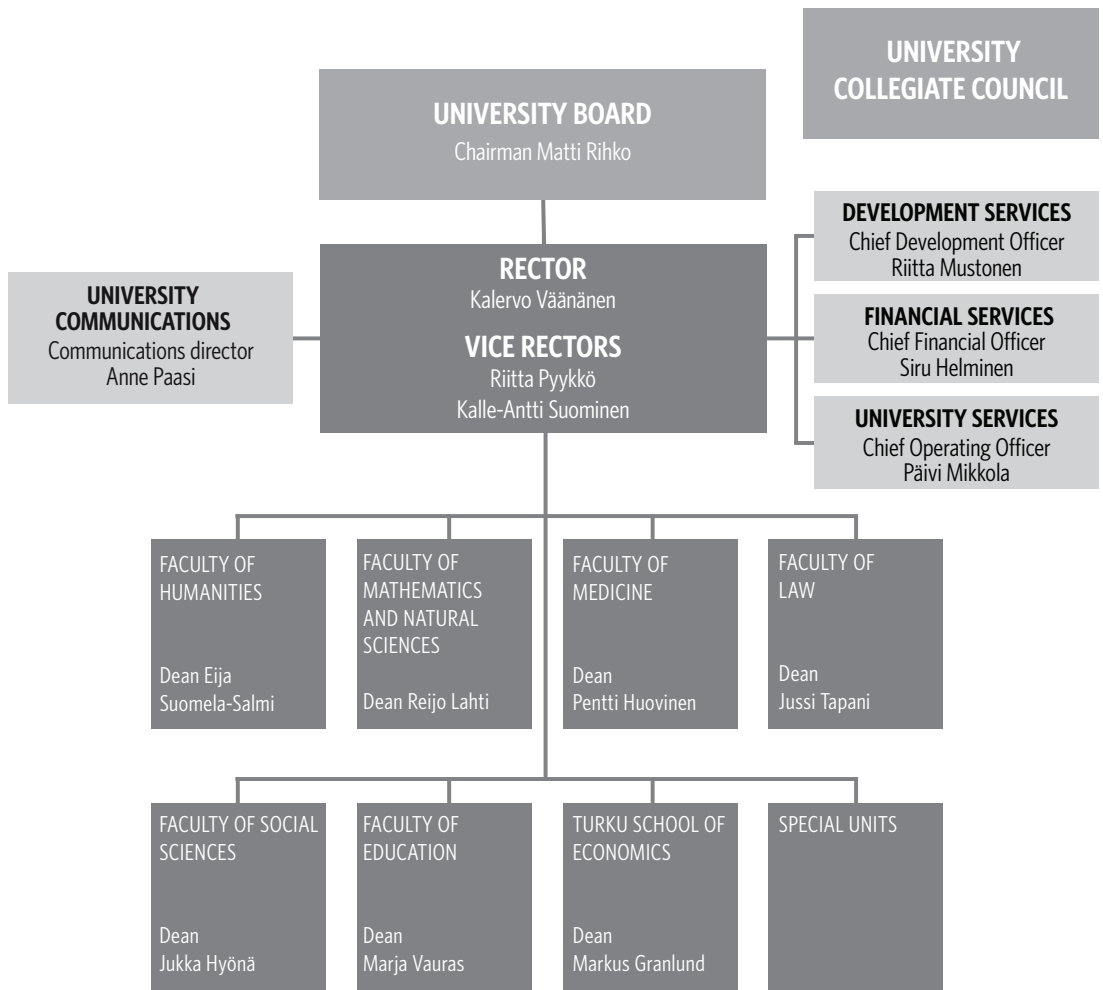
- Language Centre
- Research Unit for the Sociology of Education (RUSE)
- Brahea Centre of the University of Turku
- Turku PET Centre
- Finnish Centre for Astronomy with ESO
- Turku Centre for Biotechnology
- Turku Centre for Computer Science (TUCS).

The last four units in the above list are joint units of the University of Turku and other universities or institutions.

The central administration of the University consists of the Board, the Rector and the Vice Rectors, the University Collegiate Council, Development Services, Financial Services and University Communications and University Services.

The Board is the highest decision-making body at the University of Turku. It appoints the Rector for a period of a maximum of five years at a time. The remit of the Rector is to lead the operations of the University. Deans are responsible for managing and monitoring the faculty's operations. Departmental administration is run by the Head of Department and one or more vice heads.

The organisation chart of the University of Turku is illustrated in Figure 1.



**FIGURE 1.** The organisation chart of the University of Turku



Table 1 below presents the key statistics concerning the students and staff of the University of Turku.

**TABLE 1: Basic statistics of the University of Turku (source: national Vipunen database)**

<b>Degree students (average 2014–2016)</b>	<b>Number</b>
Bachelor's	7257
Master's	4199
Licentiate	53
Doctoral	856
<b>Graduation rates (average 2014–2016)</b>	<b>Number</b>
Bachelor's degrees	1621
Master's degrees	1708
Licentiate degrees	13
Doctoral degrees	176
<b>Staff (in 2016)</b>	<b>Number</b>
Teaching and research staff	1782
Other staff	1224

## 2.2 The quality system at the University of Turku

This chapter aims to provide a background to the quality system at the University of Turku and is based on the University's quality manual, intranet documentation and the report for the re-audit.

According to the University quality policy, the aim of quality management at the University of Turku is:

- to support and ensure the realisation of the objectives and vision set out in the University strategy
- to guide the operations with sufficiently accurate monitoring and evaluation information in real-time
- to improve the quality of the University's operational processes and free up the academic staff's working time for the basic missions of the university and
- to make the central principles and the high quality of the University's operations visible.

The main goal of quality management is to achieve and maintain high quality in the University's basic missions, research, education and societal interaction. Quality management is a part of the everyday work at the University. Every member of the University community is responsible for quality management. The quality of operations is achieved through the expert, responsible and ethical actions of all members of the University community. The University supports this by taking care of the personnel's well-being and development of their expertise.

Quality management is part of the management and steering system of the University. The quality management system of the University of Turku produces information that supports management and the realisation of the University's basic missions. This information enables the maintenance and development of the University's high-quality research, education and societal interaction. At the University of Turku, quality work is an integral part of the University's operation and is reflected in its strategy, policy programmes and steering system. All operations proceed according to the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle, illustrated in figure 2.

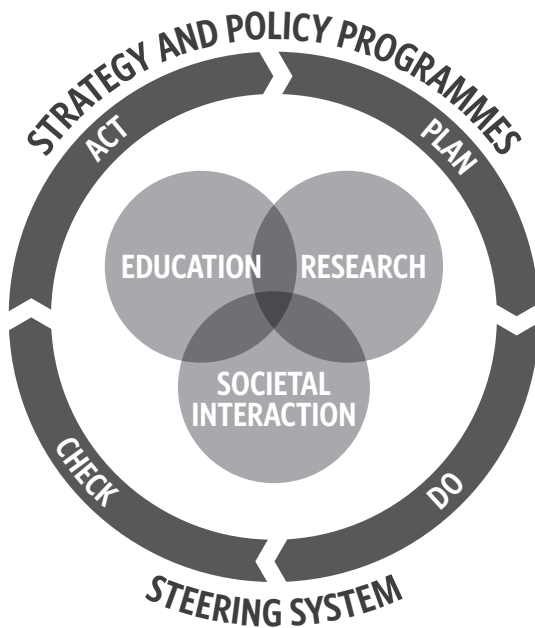


FIGURE 2. The Quality Management System of the University of Turku (source: University of Turku Quality Manual, Version 3.0. Approved on 10 February 2017)

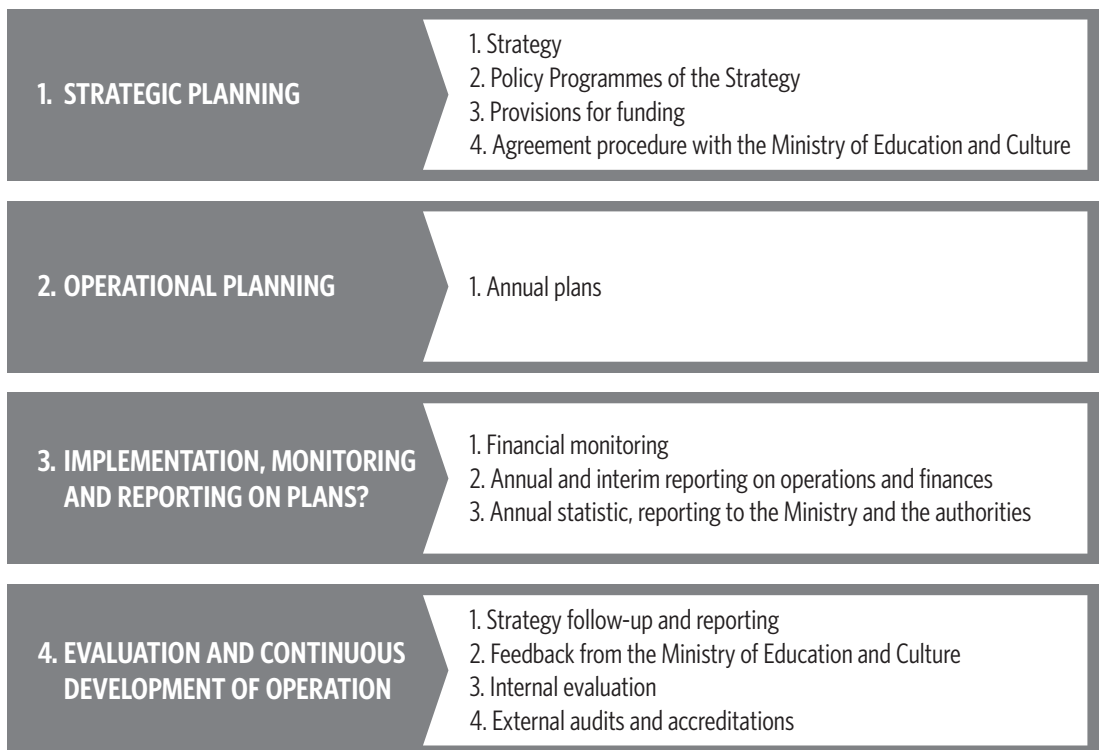
At all levels of the organisation, quality management is based on the jointly approved strategy and its policy programmes, operating principles and values. The University has a university-level quality manual in which the principles and practices of quality management are described. In addition, operations are guided by the joint policies of the University which are drafted for different focus areas, such as personnel, publications, infrastructure, risk management and

safety. The University’s intranet is an essential tool in standardising and clarifying university operations and its development has made it possible to give up the separate quality manuals of individual units.

The University Board decides on the principles of steering. The principles are related to the planning, monitoring, and development of university operations. These principles are common to all units, and they guide the University in:

- setting targets for the operations,
- allocating resources for achieving the targets,
- monitoring and reporting on the operations,
- evaluating and developing the quality and profitability of the operations.

The steering principles, illustrated in figure 3, have been divided into the following four subgroups which correspond to the basic elements of steering and the contents and structure of the annual processes related to them.



**FIGURE 3.** The University of Turku Principles of Steering. Approved by the University Board 7 June 2016.

Quality management at the University of Turku is an integrated part of all operations, and the same division of responsibilities is followed in quality management as in other operations. The Rector is responsible for the quality management of the University. According to the Rector's decision on the distribution of responsibilities between the Vice Rectors, the quality management systems belong to the remit of the Vice Rector responsible for education and the development of educational structures. The Vice Rector is supported by the Quality Manager, who is responsible for the coordination and development of the operations related to quality management, for reporting the results and information produced by the quality work, and for the communication on the quality management in collaboration with the University Communications. The organisation of the quality work is the responsibility of the deans in the faculties, or the head of department or director in the units, and the unit director or head in the University Central Services.



# Development of the quality system

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*The University of Turku has developed its quality system since the 2015 and now has functioning procedures for evaluating and developing its quality system. The University identifies its strengths and areas in need of development through the yearly PDCA system and strategic follow-up. External and internal evaluations and self-evaluations serve as the main tools for developing the quality system. The University's use of feedback from the initial audit has been particularly successful. This has led to a quality system that works better than before. The strategy, the policy programmes, the revised intranet and the PDCA cycle have contributed in unifying the quality system and integrating it into the regular operations of the University. However, the University might still benefit from explicitly describing the regular process for internally monitoring the quality system.*

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

## 3.1 Procedures for developing the quality system

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According to the audit material, the quality system is assessed and developed as part of everyday work, but also through strategy follow-up, self-evaluations, benchmarking assessment, as well as internal and external audits and evaluations. In further developing its quality system, the University has had the ambition to integrate the quality system into its regular operations, to reduce the workload and to make the quality operations as effective as possible. This is in line with the recommendations from the initial audit, where the University was recommended to consider an institutional framework of principles for the operation of its quality management procedures.

After the FINEEC initial audit in 2015, the development of the quality system took place parallel to the renewal of the strategy of the University. The new strategy is better connected to the quality system than before by linking policy programmes to the strategy, as well as having programmes which are concrete and have targets to fulfil within a specific time period. The strategy is continuously evaluated in a systematic way, and linked to the regular operations of the University.

Aside from the new strategy, the annual planning has also been improved. The University has moved towards a more systematic periodical planning and review cycle of its operations, which is primarily linked to the attainment of the University's strategy and policy programmes. The present system at the University is based on the traditional PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) quality cycle, introduced gradually from 2011. The PDCA cycle is used at different levels of the organisation to develop and monitor the implementation of university operations.

The development of quality management tools and approaches is shown by following examples: the Rector's visits to the units every second year with different themes; a Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), conducted for the first time in 2015 continued as a regular instrument with its second round in 2019; a new, more prominent role for the Research Council regarding the RAE, but also regarding a more strategic approach to the development of infrastructure; a regular curricula review in a two-year system; the development of quality of teaching, learning and guidance by the Teaching and Learning Council added with the Vice Rector's visits to all units; a reform of the intranet with standardisation and accessibility of the quality management documentation; recurrent workplace well-being surveys; advisory boards for societal interaction both at the university and faculty level; development of the support services to societal interaction; and several internal evaluations.

The audit visit confirmed that the University is very committed to utilising the external audit feedback and has been able to systematically develop the quality system based on the results of the initial audit. The University's self-evaluation prepared for the re-audit proves how an external evaluation is used and turned into concrete development actions. The self-evaluation shows the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses of the quality system (see Chapter 3.2). A timeline of the key changes in the quality system in 2008–2018 and amendments to the quality manual also demonstrate continuous development of the system. The University has solid plans in place on how to develop the quality system further.

Internal evaluations play a dual role as a procedure for assessing the quality of operations and as a procedure for developing individual quality tools. Information produced by internal evaluations has helped the University to identify the need to develop individual quality tools, such as the Rector's annual feedback to the units. The reports from internal evaluations have also helped to share good practices and make them visible, for instance, in the quality management of education. Additionally, new quality management tools, such as the library feedback system for staff members, have been introduced based on an internal evaluation.

The initial audit in 2015 proposed the University to consider periodically reviewing the quality system as a whole on a 5–7-year cycle, and clarify the roles in developing the quality system. As the external audit of the quality system takes place every sixth year, the University does not see the point in a similar evaluation initiated itself. Whilst there is evidence that the University is periodically reviewing the overall system in response to external feedback, the University could further strengthen its proactive internal approach to developing the quality system. This could be achieved by clarifying the regular internal monitoring process of the quality system as a part of the quality manual. The aims set for the quality system in the University's quality policy could be used more explicitly in evaluating the functioning of the system.

The current division of roles in developing the system work relatively well. The Steering Group for the University's Quality Work (or shorter: Steering Group for Quality), which is appointed by the Rector, has the main responsibility for monitoring the functioning of the quality system and to make suggestions for guidelines and recommendations on the development of quality work. In addition, the results of evaluations are discussed in the Extended Management Group and consequent measures are decided by the Rector in which all faculties are represented. The role of the Steering Group for Quality as a monitoring body of the system as a whole might be further facilitated if an external and independent member were included as a member of the group.

### 3.2 Development work after the previous audit

In regard to the development of the quality system, the initial audit report made several recommendations. These included for instance:

- the need for an overarching quality assurance developmental policy to improve the oversight of the entire system and assure consistency across different units;
- the need for streamlining the annual planning and reporting;
- strengthening the procedures of quality management in societal interaction; and
- further clarification of the documentation and the roles of different stakeholders engaged in quality management.

In the self-evaluation made after the initial audit, the University has identified strengths, as well as the need for development and the foci of development. The regularisation of practices and processes on the institutional level is one of these areas. Other foci of development identified by the University are increasing the organised feedback from different stakeholders and further construction of follow-up tools together with a system of incentives, as well as boosting support services. Thereby the University shows its ability to identify areas in need of development and its ability to continuously improve the quality system.

The University has developed its quality management system in all three basic tasks, education, research and societal interaction, as well as in the university services. The Board evaluates the strategy every second year, and if needed, the strategy or policy programmes are updated. The Board's preparatory sessions play an important role in the continuing evaluation. The Extended Management Group has a central role in monitoring the University's quantitative and qualitative performance and has feedback from the system every month. The data has effects on operations and the PDCA cycle functions as intended.

In education, the initial audit's recommendation for a review of curricula every 3–4 years has been discussed at the University. It was concluded that the time span is too long for a continuous assessment of the curricula, but appropriate for reforms to the curricula contents.



The initial audit also recommended that the University should improve the visibility of the quality system by strengthening its communication channels and raising the awareness of existing quality procedures. Together with the revised intranet, which also includes quality management communication, the PDCA cycle improves the visibility and uniformity of the quality system.

Another recommendation was that the reform of the Research Services should be linked to quality management. The University has launched an Adjustment and Development Programme (SOKE) according to which all the administrative personnel are centralized as part of the University Central Services. The services of the University administration are now closely linked to the quality management system, as it participates in delivering data and indicators for quality assessments.

The roles of different stakeholders have been clarified as the quality system is an integrated part of the overall steering system (strategy, policy programmes and PDCA cycle). This facilitates operations and reduces the workload. The situation for staff is continuously monitored in workplace surveys. The interviews confirmed a serious approach to results of these surveys from the management.

In developing the new strategy in 2014–15, the staff and students were involved in several ways. Additionally, external stakeholders were involved. The Futures Research Centre produced a report to support the strategy work; the Student Union prepared a report titled the University of the Future. One important part of the involvement of the internal stakeholders was the Rector's visits to the units. Another was an online survey for the University community, where everyone had the possibility to make suggestions about the ways the different parts of the strategy should be implemented. The comments from the survey, as well as the reactions during the Rector's visits, were included as inputs into the formulation of the policy programmes.

In addition, the role, composition and working methods of the university-level Advisory Board were developed to better serve the University's profile and preparation and implementation of the strategy. Stakeholder meetings are organised more regularly than before, and the utilisation of the information gathered from the meetings is more systematic.

The re-audit team thus finds that the University has comprehensively taken into account recommendations from the 2015 audit, and, as a result, the quality system of the University works essentially better than before.

# Societal impact and regional development work

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*After the initial audit in 2015, the University has significantly progressed in developing the quality management for its societal interaction. It has clearly defined the concept of societal interaction<sup>1</sup> and drafted a systematic working programme to implement quality management in societal interaction. Moreover, the University has defined strategic goals and follow-up targets for societal interaction in one of its policy programmes. The quality management procedures for societal interaction are mainly related to producing relevant information for the development of operations, but their standardisation is partly still in process. The involvement of different actors in developing the concept and quality management of societal interaction has been inclusive, comprising both external and internal stakeholders. The quality management of key services supporting societal interaction, such as Development Services and Communications Services, function relatively well.*

*The quality management for societal impact and regional work is at a **developing** stage.*

## 4.1 Functioning of the quality management procedures

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Strategic goals and a development agenda have been set for societal interaction

At the time of the initial audit in 2015, the link between societal interaction and quality management was largely missing. The audit team encouraged the University to define concrete goals for regional work, to build quality management procedures and find a structural, systematic means of communication and evaluation of its societal interaction at all levels of the university.

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<sup>1</sup> In the University's report for the re-audit, the University refers to the strategic goal "the University aims to operate in various ways with its stakeholders" and states that it was imperative to create an explicit conception for the needs of quality management. From the University mission viewpoint, this is referred to as 'interaction with society'. Following the definition of the University, the audit team uses the concept of *societal interaction* in the report - excluding the main headings which follow the FINEEC standard reporting format.

Based on the audit material and interviews, the University has followed these recommendations. In order to build an overall picture of societal interaction, the faculty reports from 2015 were compiled and activities were clustered. As a result, it was concluded that the most workable classification for quality management in regard to societal interaction is to group it with the basic missions of education and research, instead of viewing it as a separate third mission of the University. Some aspects of the societal interaction fall under education and research, while other aspects, such as for instance providing expert tasks, innovation services and regional development, are placed in between education and research.

Societal interaction is now linked to the University strategy by a separate policy programme. The objectives set for societal interaction in the policy programme are the following:

- The University maintains target-oriented, effective and transparent collaboration with the surrounding society. The University has recognised its most important regional, national and international strategic partners.
- The University has an influence on the development of the region's well-being and economic structure. We are a high-quality, effective and sought-after partner in both national and international co-operation. We highlight the significance of research and education as the basis and support of societal decision making.
- The University encourages its personnel to participate in societal dialogue and interaction and to operate in networks.

The audit team commends the University for aligning societal interaction with other policy programmes, such as policy programmes for entrepreneurship, transnational education and innovation activities and education and research. Added to this, the University has drafted a Development Agenda with nine connected work packages to systematically enhance societal interaction. In the interviews, members of the Working Group for Societal Interaction were able to critically assess the progress made so far and to identify the next development targets. In order to support staff members, intranet-based guidelines have been drafted on societal interaction in Finnish. Based on all this, the audit team concludes that awareness of societal interaction and the visibility of quality work have increased at all levels of the University.

### **Quality management of societal interaction has progressed notably**

Since the initial audit, the University has strengthened the organisational structures for societal interaction from strategic to operational levels by establishing special responsibilities and teams for it. The Rector has appointed the above-mentioned Working Group for Societal Interaction to develop conditions and practices of societal interaction. Additionally, the University has set up a new unit called Development Services, within University Central Services, to support the strategy implementation and follow-up. The University Management Group follows the progress of the strategy and the results are discussed in the Extended Management Group and in the meetings of the heads of departments. The university-level Advisory Board's role in the planning and follow-up of societal interaction has been emphasised. Moreover, faculty-level advisory boards have been introduced in all faculties.

Since 2016, an annual PDCA cycle has been adopted for the quality management of societal interaction. The annual report materials of the units are evaluated and analysed in April; the feedback collected from external stakeholders is analysed and development trends are outlined in August; the annual plan for societal interaction for the following year is prepared in November. Action points, schedules, responsible parties and follow-up targets/indicators have been defined for each policy programme. The persons responsible for dedicated policy programmes have the task of drafting detailed plans for implementation, including schedules and methods for follow-up. The Development Services are responsible for the overall follow-up of the progress of the measures and they have the task of drafting a summary of the collected data.

The audit team had access to samples of the units' interim and annual reports, which confirm progress and the functioning of the PDCA in societal interaction. In the reports, faculties not only analyse the status quo and strengths and risks as regards to strategic objectives, but also report on corrective actions.

Interviewed experts in key positions are well aware that the quality management of societal interaction is still a work in progress and needs to be further standardised. Particularly the Rector's written feedback and strategic follow-up framework for societal interaction could be specified to better steer faculties in actions related to quality management for societal interaction.

As for the quality management of societal interaction implemented through degree education, current procedures such as graduate placement surveys and career follow-up support the curriculum renewal process fairly well. Student representatives are actively engaged in the process of curriculum design, where the employment relevance and working life skills provided by the degrees are being emphasized increasingly. Course descriptions also provide information about their working life relevance and most degree programmes include an entrepreneurial component in their syllabus. The University has recently broadened the use of faculty-level advisory boards to all faculties with the intention of increasing the input from external stakeholders for the curriculum planning. While the interviewed stakeholders were very committed to contributing, the working practices of the advisory boards still vary and need to be formalised.

A portion of the delivery of teaching is carried out in co-operation with external stakeholders, mostly through the engagement of alumni and experts from the business world. A commendable form of alumni activity is the University's Mentoring Programme, which is aimed at degree students reaching the end of their studies. Its main purpose is to support students in their career planning and to strengthen their preparedness for working life. The Career Services also support students in their career planning through a job database targeted at students and recent graduates of the university. It also organises various courses on career planning throughout the academic year, such as CV Clinics, tailored to the needs of individual students. Internship placements present another form of societal interaction available to students. During their studies, students can work on real-life projects within partner organisations representing both the private and the public sector. The selection of thesis topics that address socially relevant issues is also encouraged by the University.

Independent units such as Brahea Centre, Open University and TSE Exe and the faculty of education have a central role in the realisation of lifelong learning, specialisation education and the University's interaction with its operational environment. The audit team confirmed that independent units have procedures in place to collect and utilise partner/client and student feedback from short- and long-term contracted training.

The audit team was impressed by many good examples that show the University's commitment to society through research. These examples included for instance the Entrepreneurial University, the Children's University, and support for open science and research. Openness in research is one of the University's central principles, and one of the policy programmes in the University's new strategy is aimed at promoting open science. The quality management of the OpenUTU is integrated in the quality management through the PDCA cycle for research, and this seems to work well. More systematic support for the dissemination of research results to the wider public was one area where academic staff saw opportunities for improvement in the future.

Follow-up for the Entrepreneurship Policy Programme is demonstrated includes various measures. Examples of strategic follow-up targets include the number of participants in the Entrepreneurial Act of the Year competition and the number of participants in entrepreneurial education and how widely the education is offered. It is noteworthy that the University has started preparations for accreditation as part of the Entrepreneurial University as one of four European pilot institutions.

### **Strong regional collaboration has supported the University's strategy work**

One of the strengths of the University of Turku in societal interaction is its regional collaboration through various initiatives. The University Strategy 2016–2020 and policy programmes, based on a broad participatory process and stakeholder involvement, are aligned with the strategy of City of Turku. Reciprocally, the University has engaged in the regional foresight and strategy work in collaboration with the Regional Council of Southwest Finland. The intensive HEI collaboration (Korkeakoulukumppani) is an important platform for local entrepreneurs and businesses within regional innovation ecosystems. Clearly, the University has a recognized position in its region.

The University has identified the need for an overview of strategic partnerships at the university level, and it has started the process by drafting criteria for partnerships. Development of a strategic approach to partnerships is on the agenda of the Steering Group for Societal Interaction. In addition to the specification of strategic partnerships, the audit team recommends the University develop a procedure for the continuous evaluation of partnerships.

The Pori units of the University of Turku are part of the wider University Consortium of Pori. The network of four universities operating in a multi-disciplinary scientific and artistic environment consist of the University of Turku, Aalto University, Tampere University of Technology and University of Tampere. Collaboration between students and businesses within the Pori Campus offers innovative prospects especially for the Faculty of Humanities in promoting new industries and cultural production. The audit team recommends further considering how to make internal processes more effective and to develop indicators for the follow-up of innovation activities at university level.

## 4.2 Participation in quality work for societal impact and regional development

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The initial audit encouraged the University to use the support of external and internal stakeholders and the expertise of the University Board to establish a functional quality management system for societal interaction. Documentation and interviews confirmed that both external and internal stakeholders, including staff members, students, alumni and the University Board, were widely involved in the University strategy process in 2015–2016 and in setting objectives for societal interaction.

Furthermore, the working practices of the University Advisory Board have been reformed and a regular thematic meeting procedure with external stakeholders has been launched to inform them and to benefit from their expertise. As mentioned earlier, external stakeholders, are involved in various bodies, such as advisory groups, at faculty level and with the University Board. Thereby, the audit team concludes that involvement of external and internal stakeholders in developing societal interaction and its quality management has considerably increased since the initial audit in 2015.

While the faculties are primarily in charge of running their alumni co-operation, the University has a Steering Group for Alumni Relations and has nominated the Student Support Services as a responsible unit for development of the University's alumni activities. The audit team welcomes the University's plan to appoint a liaison person in each faculty as an effort to increase coordination of alumni cooperation between the faculty and university level. The interviewed alumni representatives indicated that the wide alumni network has expertise and potential which is not yet fully utilised. The audit team recommends the University to continue to develop methods of alumni cooperation further.

Staff members and students participate in the development of societal interaction activities through various bodies. In the audit interview, members of the Working Group for Societal Interaction stated that involvement of staff members and students in societal interaction could be still strengthened. Based on the audit documentation, faculties aim to integrate tasks related to societal interaction in staff work plans, and staff members report on the realisation of these tasks in their electronic CVs. However, as various forms of societal interaction, such as expert tasks and popularisation of research results, are not currently embedded in strategic follow-up targets, the faculties see a risk in focusing mainly on those areas of societal interaction that are financially rewarded.

## 4.3 Quality management of key support services for societal impact and regional development work

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Key support services for societal interaction currently consist of the University Services, the University Communications unit, the Open University, Financial Services, IT Services and Turku University Library.

The newly introduced Development Services has a strategic and horizontal role including a clear responsibility in following-up and developing measures for quality management for societal interaction at all levels of the university. However, their mandate should be clarified in relation to vertical units of administration and for services.

The University Communications unit has the task of supporting the communication with stakeholders both at the institutional and operational level, and also for marketing the services. The audit team recommends that the University Communications unit together with faculties and other units could strengthen their common procedures for stakeholder communication.

The support services are evaluated as a part of the University's annual self-evaluation process and by methods determined by the units themselves. For example, the University of Turku Library and IT Services regularly develop their services based on customer satisfaction surveys. The quality of services is also examined as a part of the regular surveys for students. Additionally, service units have benchmarked their processes and procedures with other corresponding organisations, particularly during the Adjustment and Development Programme (SOKE).

# The quality system as a whole

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*As a result of the University's extensive development work related to the quality management of societal interaction, the quality system now covers all the University's basic tasks. The strategy renewal process and development of the quality system based on the recommendations of the initial audit were closely linked to each other. The strategy follow-up, policy programmes with follow-up measures, updated steering system and the PDCA cycle form the functioning core of the quality system. Internal assessments complement the information produced by the quality system. The recurring Research Assessment Exercise and the Rector's visits to units are good practices. There is evidence that the quality system has an impact on the development of the university's operations. An open quality culture is a strength of the University and has been further developed since the initial audit.*

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

## 5.1 Comprehensiveness and impact of the quality system

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The new strategy and quality management are now closely linked to each other

At the time of the initial audit, the University of Turku was about to launch a new strategy process. The audit team recommended that the development of the new University strategy and quality system should inform each other.

The University of Turku's new strategy for 2016–2020, drafted after the initial audit, is built on four main themes: effective research, responsible education, being a catalyst for social well-being and the economy, and community well-being. The strategy is implemented with sixteen theme-specific policy programmes which define actions, schedules, responsible parties and indicators for follow-up.



The audit team confirmed that the new strategy is linked to quality management. Connected to the strategy renewal, the University renewed the principles for steering and aligned them with the PDCA cycle at the University level and updated the quality manual accordingly. The principles of steering are structured in four main sections: strategic planning, operational planning (Plan), implementing (Do), monitoring and reporting on plans (Check) and evaluation and continuous development of operations (Act).

The annual planning and reporting combine the University's and units' strategy work. The implementation of the policy programmes is analysed biannually. Annual and interim reporting functions as a form of self-evaluation for the units. The Rector gives the units written feedback on these reports. The units define the targets of development in their operations based on this feedback. The effectiveness of the development activities is monitored, for instance, during the Rector's visits to the units, where one point on the agenda focuses on the development activities agreed during the previous visit and their current situation.

In addition to the strategy follow-up, the 'Act-phase' in the PDCA-cycle is complemented by external feedback from external evaluations and from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the University's internal evaluations. The purpose of the internal evaluations is to monitor the University's achievement of its aims and to improve the quality of the operations in selected themes. After FINEEC initial audit in 2015, several internal evaluations have been conducted, some of them recurring. Examples of internal evaluations consist of self-evaluation of international Master's degree programmes, evaluation of the library, and the Rector's visits to units. The Rector's and Vice Rectors' visits to the units have a long tradition and topics have ranged from utilization of research evaluation results to the quality of teaching, learning and guidance. The audit team finds the Rector's visits a good practice and an excellent indication of engaging in strategic dialogue with the units. The audit team confirmed that internal evaluations have had an impact on the development of operations.

Thereby, the policy programmes, annual planning and reporting system, and the PDCA cycle complemented by external and internal evaluations, as well as the Rector's visits to the units form a functioning institutional framework for quality management.

As far as the quality management of the University's three basic duties, the initial audit recommended the University to integrate societal interaction as a part of the quality system. The audit team praises the University for the progress in this area and concludes that education, research and societal interaction are now embedded in the quality system through the annual reporting system and task-specific PDCA-cycles. As a result, the quality system now functions more evenly than before regarding the three basic tasks of the university.

## **Curriculum development and student feedback form the core of quality management of education**

The PDCA cycle for education defines quality management procedures and responsibilities from the perspective of the University, faculty and student levels. The Teaching and Learning Council is instrumental in steering the quality management of education as it monitors and promotes the implementation of the University's strategy and develops the quality of teaching and learning. There are functioning quality management procedures for basic degree education, scientific post-graduate education and non-degree education.

Interviews with students indicated that they are actively involved in the planning of education and are regularly invited to participate in the development and revision of curricula. In overall, the curricula planning process has considerably improved with the adoption of the PDCA cycle since the initial audit.

In regard to the delivery of education, all the interviewed students agreed that the pedagogical aims and requirements are provided at the beginning of the course and are consistently followed during its implementation. Teachers are supported to develop their teaching, for instance by having pedagogic training, increased intranet materials and examples of good practice.

The versatile forms of student feedback consist of course feedback, a survey at the start of studies, the annual follow-up report for doctoral candidates, a national student feedback survey, a follow-up survey on placement in the labour market, and a career and employment survey. Student feedback mechanisms and the utilisation of feedback have been targets of development and harmonization over the past few years. The Teaching and Learning Council has, for instance, prepared a set of general course assessment questions and a chart of student feedback utilisation for the use of the faculties.

Based on the Rector's written feedback on the faculties' interim reports, there are many good practices related, among others, to developing electronic feedback systems and utilising feedback. However, variation in collecting course feedback and low response rates from the students have remained a challenge. The interviewed students believed that their feedback has had an impact, however, more efforts should be devoted to harmonizing the collection of course feedback in faculties and informing students of the consequent actions. The audit team believes that a more systematic closure of the feedback loop to students would increase the impact of the process and may lead to higher response rates.

## **Quality management of research has an impact**

Regarding research, traditional peer reviews, the research assessment exercise (RAE) and the UTUCris research portal comprise the main methods for implementing quality management. The regular RAE is one of the strengths of the University's quality system. In the latest RAE performed in 2015, each unit assessed its strengths and targets for development and received feedback. Research units have utilised the RAE's results in research profiling and organisation,

while at the University level, results have served negotiations for strategic funding with the Ministry of Education and Culture. The utilisation of the results of the RAE has been effectively strengthened by the Rector's visits to the units. The audit team notes with satisfaction that the RAE will continue with a follow-up in the autumn of 2017, and that the entire exercise will form a recurring quality process to be conducted again in 2019.

Other national and international research evaluations also have an impact on university operations. In terms of data management, the UTUCris portal is used for reporting and monitoring research outputs thereby improving their quality. The University has successfully developed support services, especially project management and additional funding practices. The role of the Research Council has been strengthened in terms of quality management. It monitors the implementation of development actions in research, participates in the quality management in research, and makes suggestions for measures on matters related to research.

The initial audit recommended the University of Turku Graduate School (UTUGS) to clarify responsibilities between different parties, develop procedures for monitoring student progress, and develop instructions that will help in the quality management of the new graduate school system. The audit team commends UTUGS for significant improvement measures including: a review of doctoral programmes, a survey of doctoral candidate satisfaction, streamlining and standardising application procedures, and the preparation of a description of doctoral training, which have all had positive impacts on operations.

### **The strategic significance of quality management for societal interaction has been emphasised**

In response to the recommendation of the initial audit, the University has significantly systematised quality management procedures regarding societal interaction, which has resulted in improvements in terms of the comprehensiveness of the system. The strategic importance of societal interaction is highlighted by the fact that it now has a dedicated policy programme, and moreover, it is one of the cross-cutting aspects emphasised throughout the policy programmes.

The University's actions taken to improve the quality management of societal interaction have included an inclusive definition of the concept and systematic implementation of development agenda, and adoption of the PDCA cycle. Furthermore, the roles of various University bodies related to societal interaction have been clarified and improved and the roles of the service units have been redesigned, including establishing a new unit called Development Services. The Extended Management Group functions as the steering group for societal interaction. In addition, at the University level the Working Group for Societal Interaction has been established in addition to advisory groups for societal interaction in the faculties. The external feedback from the University Board and various stakeholders has been increased and regularized. According to the audit visit interviews, there is evidence that feedback from external stakeholders has had an impact, for instance, on the strategy renewal and curriculum development. Students are also supported in their career planning by a well-functioning mentoring programme.

While the quality management procedures for societal interaction are in place, the audit team agrees with the University that the next development targets will consist of adjusting the follow-up indicators, defining strategic partnerships and further coordination of alumni cooperation at the university and faculty levels.

### The University is moving towards centralised services

A major reform taking place at the University is the development of the administrative and support services during 'the Adjustment and Development Programme' (SOKE programme) which was originally initiated due to the decrease in government funding and the following need for savings. However, the University sees SOKE also as a possibility to renew and develop the University's operations and their quality. The renewal of services is expected to enhance standardisation and the transparency of processes at the University and improve the systematic nature of operations. The SOKE programme proceeds in stages and will result in a major change in the way in which services are produced by centralising all administrative personnel to the University Central Services. At the time of the audit visit, administrative decisions had been taken but they had not yet been communicated to the University staff and students.

While the SOKE programme is necessary and it has remarkable potential in enhancing quality management through streamlined and more efficient services, many staff members interviewed by the audit team expressed their concern about the uncertainty that the reform will cause. Therefore, the audit team recommends that the University proceeds cautiously with the reforms as there is a risk that it may harm the University's current open quality culture based on trust.

## 5.2 Quality culture

Based on the initial audit, a quality culture which is built into the everyday life of the community was one of the key strengths of the University. The re-audit and interviews confirmed that the quality culture remains strong and has been actively supported by the University. The Rector's visit to units were often mentioned as a means to strengthen the atmosphere of openness and mutual trust. The inclusive preparation of the strategy has advanced the engagement of staff and students and their commitment to the strategic goals of the University. Overall, there is a strong culture of participation among staff members.

Achieving the well-being of staff and students is one the University's strategic objectives, and this is shown by several efforts to improve the well-being and involvement of staff and students. Based on the results of a workplace well-being survey, units launched development measures in the beginning of 2016. Training sessions titled "From survey results to development" were provided to supervisors and special support was offered to units where workplace well-being was below the University average.

The students' overall experience appeared to be very positive from what the audit team learned during the visit. Students highlighted the collegial and open atmosphere as a factor that contributes very much to their satisfaction. The University is highly committed to ensuring the participation and representation of its students at all levels of the organisation, and the Rector meets regularly (at least once a month) with representatives of the Student Union. In order to improve the participation of students in these bodies, as a good practice, the University offers students additional study credits and remuneration in return for their service. Furthermore, the University's strategic emphasis on providing a positive experience for first-year students has underlined the importance of integrating students into the university community.

While students are involved in the key decision-making bodies in a meaningful manner, the transfer of information from previous student representative to their successors is largely informal and person-dependent, and appears to be a challenge. The audit team would thus recommend the University and the Student Union together establish more systematic procedures ensuring that all students receive adequate information related to the work of the decision-making bodies and the expectations placed on its members. In addition, there is room for improvement in the preparation of students for their roles. Possible solutions include student representative induction training and the development of a student representative handbook that would assist the work of student representatives.

## 5.3 The quality system as a whole

According to the University's Quality Policy, one of the aims of quality management is to support and ensure the realisation of the objectives and vision set in the University Strategy. The quality system fulfils this aim well. Monitoring and evaluation have been improved by the PDCA cycle and the reformed steering system, which provide sufficient information to develop university operations. The main links that tie the different elements of the quality system as one functioning whole are the strategy follow-up through policy programmes, annual and interim reporting and the PDCA cycle as a unified approach to the quality system at the University level and in regard to the three basic duties of the University.

The documentation of the quality system has been improved, as was recommended by the initial audit. According to University policy, the intranet and the public web pages are the primary forum for presenting quality documentation, and the use and importance of unit-specific operations manuals has at the same time considerably decreased. The audit team confirmed that the revised quality manual and material on the internet and intranet have increased the visibility and communicativeness of the quality system within the University community. While the interviews confirmed the usefulness of the university-level quality manual, some of faculties and units maintain their own intranet-based quality manuals and guidelines while others refer to the university-level documentation. Thus, the University could still clarify the relationship between the common and unit-specific documentation. Furthermore, the current university-level quality manual, including a lot of organizational descriptions, could be either renamed as the *Operations Manual*, or its contents could be more explicitly restricted to quality management procedures.

The steering system, including annual planning and reporting, was streamlined and simplified in 2016–2017 to take into consideration concerns expressed by the units. Based on the principles of steering, the division of responsibilities is integrated into the existing management structure. The responsibilities function well and the members of the management at different levels are committed to their roles. The Rector is responsible for quality management, while operational work is the responsibility of the Vice Rector responsible for teaching, who also chairs the Steering Group for Quality.

The Extended Management Group plays a key role in monitoring the University's qualitative and quantitative performance. The Deans greatly valued frequent interaction with the University rectorate through the Extended Management Group and were of the opinion that the group significantly supports their work and that this advances internal cohesion within the university. At the department level, the Department Heads recognise their responsibility regarding quality management and the role of the development discussions (performance reviews) with staff members in the quality system.

As a result of the changes and strengthening of the aforementioned responsibilities, the previous quality contact persons' network has become obsolete and has been discontinued. While this decision was well supported in the audit visit interview by the steering group for quality, it should be ensured that communication with the units and dissemination of good practice finds new channels.

Information management related to quality management has been improved. The University has recently introduced the TOPI system as a central electronic tool for planning and monitoring operations. To support the electronic steering system of the University, a data warehouse makes it possible to combine information from various sources and thus generate a variety of reports to support the management, operational evaluation, steering and decision making at the University. Based on the interviews, all this has meant a significant step forward in real-time monitoring. The units prepare and submit their annual plans in the system, which also acts as a publishing tool for contract and negotiation materials, financial decisions, reports and other central documents in steering. The TOPI system is also used in the project management for supplementary funding. The full potential of the TOPI system in quality management was not yet visible due to its short history.

As a whole, the audit team concludes that the quality management procedures of the University of Turku function well and form a comprehensive whole. The quality management is an integrated part of operations. Annual planning and reporting has been improved, the information flow is better, the use of evaluation results is more effective and external stakeholders are better involved in quality management. Interviews by the audit team confirmed that staff, students and external stakeholders feel that quality management procedures function better than they did before.

The strengthening of the quality system since the initial audit demonstrates a strong commitment by the University towards quality management of its activities, and forms a solid basis for future development of the system in support of the strategic objectives of the University. The audit team encourages the University to continue its development work based on its own goals and objectives.



# 6

## Conclusions

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### 6.1 Strengths and areas for further development in relation to the re-audit targets

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In summary, the main strengths and areas for further development with respect to the three audit targets evaluated in the re-audit are presented below.

The audit team commends the University of Turku for the development work that has taken place since the initial audit. The following are considered the main strengths of the development of the quality system, societal impact and regional development work and the quality system as a whole:

- The link between the University strategy and the quality system has significantly improved. Follow-up of the strategy and quality management takes place mainly through the annual planning and reporting system and is guided by concrete policy programmes. The strategy renewal process was inclusive and utilised versatile approaches in its implementation. This has led to a high awareness and commitment to the strategy throughout the University community.
- The PDCA-cycle is embedded in the renewed principles of the University steering system and it is now used as a central quality management tool covering all basic tasks of the University. There is evidence that the use of the PDCA-cycle has had an impact on the quality of the operations.
- The University has progressed considerably in quality management for societal interaction and has integrated this as a part of the quality system. A development agenda and new organisational structures have been established to support quality management in societal interaction. A functioning mentoring programme for students and adoption of advisory boards by all faculties are additional examples of successful development work.
- The Research Assessment Exercise, which is a recurring element in the quality system, has had a positive impact on designing the research profiles of the faculties and on the strategic development of research.



- The Rector's visits to the units, with a different thematic emphasis in different years, have promoted strategic dialogue between the top management and the units and have enhanced the utilisation of internal and external evaluations.
- The quality culture is open and based on mutual trust. It has been further supported through the involvement of staff, students and external stakeholders in quality management and choosing community well-being and creating a positive experience for first year students as the centre of development.
- The quality management of the University of Turku Graduate School (UTUGS) has improved through the review of doctoral programmes and surveys of doctoral candidate satisfaction.
- The roles of different bodies and division of responsibilities of key actors have been clarified and strengthened to support quality management, communication and commitment.

In the further development of its quality system, the audit team recommends the University of Turku to consider the following:

- Although the quality management of societal interaction has improved, it is still in need of standardisation, widening the scope of follow-up indicators and further development of strategic partnerships. Coordination at the university level is needed to improve the impact of alumni work as well as to streamline newly adopted advisory boards in faculties.
- The University has initiated its Adjustment and Development Programme (SOKE programme) to standardise its support services and thereby to improve their quality. However, as there were worries among the staff members about the transparency of the process, special attention must be paid not to weaken the culture and trust in the University.
- Whilst there is evidence that the University is periodically reviewing and improving the overall quality system in response to external feedback, the University could further strengthen its proactive internal approach to developing its quality system. The University is recommended to clarify the regular internal monitoring process of the quality system as a part of the quality manual. Strengthening the monitoring role of the Steering Group for Quality would benefit the development and oversights of the quality system.
- The quality documentation should still be clarified regarding the relation of the university-level quality manual and quality documentation in units. Furthermore, the format of the current university-level quality manual could be further developed.
- The collection of student course feedback could be made more consistent across faculties to allow more standardised use. Students should be given feedback on the actions taken based on their feedback which might lead to higher response rates.
- The University in cooperation with the Student Union might consider establishing more systematic procedures to ensure that students becoming new members of the decision-making bodies receive adequate information related to the work of these bodies and the expectations placed on their members.

## 6.2 The audit team's overall assessment

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The quality system of the University of Turku fulfils the FINEEC criteria for the quality system as a whole and for the quality management as it relates to basic duties. All of the re-audit targets are at the developing stage. The audit team proposes to the FINEEC Higher Education Evaluation Committee that the University of Turku passes the re-audit.

## 6.3 Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision

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In its meeting on 16 June 2017, the Higher Education Evaluation Committee decided, based on the proposal and report of the audit team, that the quality system of the University of Turku meets the FINEEC criteria for quality systems as a whole and quality management of the higher education institution's basic duties. The University of Turku has been awarded a quality label that is valid for six years beginning on 16 June 2017.

## APPENDIX 1: Table of the audit targets and criteria

TARGETS	CRITERIA			
	ABSENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	
1. The quality policy of the higher education institution	<p>The quality system shows a complete absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• definition of the system's objectives and responsibilities</li> <li>• knowledge and commitment of those responsible</li> <li>• documentation of the system and the information it produces or</li> <li>• suitable communication.</li> </ul>	<p>The quality system's objectives and responsibilities have not been clearly defined. The division of responsibility works only partially, and those responsible for the operations exhibit widely differing skill levels and commitment to their duties.</p> <p>The quality system and the information it produces are inadequately documented. The information needs of the HEI's personnel groups, students or external stakeholders are not adequately addressed in the documentation. Information produced by the system is not systematically communicated within the institution or to external stakeholders.</p>	<p>The quality system's objectives and responsibilities are clearly defined. The goalsetting process is an inclusive one. The division of responsibility functions well. The key people responsible for the operations are committed to their duties and have sufficient skills to undertake them.</p> <p>The quality system and the information it produces is documented in a clear and appropriate manner. For the most part, the information needs of the HEI's personnel groups, students and external stakeholders are taken into account in the documentation. The information produced by the system is communicated in a systematic and targeted manner within the institution and to external stakeholders.</p>	<p>The objectives of the quality system are defined in a very clear and inclusive manner. The objectives and division of responsibility provide excellent support for the development of the institution's operations. There is clear and continuous evidence of the skill level and commitment of those responsible for the operations.</p> <p>The HEI has systematic and well-established procedures for documenting the quality system and the information it produces so that the documentation satisfies the information needs of various parties. The institution has excellent and well-established procedures for communicating information to different personnel groups, students and external stakeholders. Communication is active and up-to date.</p>
				ADVANCED

**TARGETS**

**CRITERIA**

	ABSENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	ADVANCED
<p><b>2. Strategic and operations management</b></p>	<p>The quality system shows a complete absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• links to strategic planning, management and operations management</li> <li>• ability to meet the needs of strategic and operations management or</li> <li>• commitment to quality work of managers involved in operations management.</li> </ul>	<p>The quality system is not sufficiently well linked to the HEI's strategic planning, management and operations management. The system and the information it produces do not serve the needs of strategic and operations management in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>The system does not serve as a meaningful management tool at all organisational levels, and managers involved in operations management show a lack of commitment to joint quality work.</p>	<p>The quality system is quite well linked to the HEI's strategic planning, management and operations management. The system and the information it produces serve strategic and operations management, and there is evidence that the information is put to use.</p> <p>In terms of management, the system works at different organisational levels, and the managers involved in operations management are committed to joint quality work.</p>	<p>Quality management is a natural part of the HEI's strategic planning, management and operations management. The institution has systematic, well-established and excellent procedures that produce information for strategic and operations management and there is clear and continuous evidence that information is put to systematic and wide use.</p> <p>In terms of management, the quality system works in an excellent manner at all organisational levels, and there is clear and continuous evidence that managers involved in operations management are committed to joint quality work.</p>

TARGETS

CRITERIA

	ABSENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	ADVANCED
<p><b>3. Development of the quality system</b></p>	<p>The HEI shows a complete absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>procedures for evaluating or developing the quality system or</li> <li>overall view of the functioning of the quality system.</li> </ul>	<p>The HEI has inadequate procedures for evaluating and developing the quality system. It has a weak overall view of the functioning of the quality system. System development is not systematic.</p>	<p>The HEI has wellfunctioning procedures for evaluating and developing the quality system. It is able to identify the system's strengths and areas in need of development, and system development is systematic.</p>	<p>The HEI has wellestablished and systematic procedures for evaluating and developing the system. It is able to efficiently identify the system's strengths and areas in need of development, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the system. There is clear and continuous evidence of the system's successful development work.</p>
<p><i>Followup section for the HEIs subject to the second FINHEEC audit:</i></p>	<p>The HEI shows a complete absence of or major shortcomings in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the development work following the first audit.</li> </ul>	<p>The development of the quality system after the first audit has not been systematic or effective.</p>	<p>The development of the quality system after the first audit has been systematic. The system works better than before.</p>	<p>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 very successful and effective manner.</p>

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

TARGETS	CRITERIA		
	ABSENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING
<p><b>4. Quality management of the higher education institution's basic duties</b></p> <p><b>4a) Degree education</b></p> <p><b>4b) Research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities</b></p> <p><b>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)</b></p> <p><b>4d) Optional audit target</b></p>	<p>The quality system shows a complete absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quality management procedures used to achieve the goals set for the operations</li> <li>• links between goals set for the activities and the HEI's overall strategy</li> <li>• participation of the institution's personnel groups, students or external stakeholders in the development of the operations or</li> <li>• quality management of support services that are key to the operations.</li> </ul>	<p>The quality management procedures are not fully functional and do not support the achievement of goals set for the operations in a meaningful manner. The goals are not linked to the HEI's overall strategy.</p> <p>The quality system provides insufficient information for the quality management of the operations, and information use is sporadic and/or information collection is an end in itself.</p> <p>The personnel groups, students and external stakeholders are not involved in the development of the operations in a meaningful manner.</p> <p>The quality management of key support services is not functional.</p>	<p>Functional quality management procedures advance the development of the operations and the achievement of goals set for the operations. The objectives are mostly linked to the overall strategy of the HEI.</p> <p>The quality system produces relevant information for the quality management of the operations, and the information is used to develop the HEI's operations in a meaningful manner.</p> <p>Personnel groups and students are involved in the development of the operations in a meaningful manner. External stakeholders also participate in the development work.</p> <p>The quality management of key support services functions relatively well.</p>
			<p><b>ADVANCED</b></p> <p>The HEI has systematic and well-established quality management procedures that provide excellent support for the development of the operations and the implementation of the institution's overall strategy.</p> <p>There is clear and continuous evidence of the system's effectiveness in achieving the goals set for the operations.</p> <p>The HEI has systematic and excellent procedures used to produce information for the quality management of the operations. Information is used systematically, and there is clear and continuous evidence to show that it is successfully used to develop the operations.</p> <p>Personnel groups and students are committed and very actively involved in developing the operations. Special attention has been given to the workload generated by the quality management procedures.</p> <p>External stakeholders are involved in the development work in a meaningful manner.</p> <p>The HEI has systematic and well-established procedures for the quality management of key support services. There is clear and continuous evidence that the procedures function well.</p>

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

**TARGETS**

**CRITERIA**

	ABSENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	ADVANCED
<p><b>5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes</b></p> <p><b>Planning of education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curricula and their preparation</li> <li>• Intended learning outcomes and their definition</li> <li>• Links between research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities, and education</li> <li>• Lifelong learning</li> <li>• Relevance of degrees to working life</li> <li>• Participation of different personnel groups, students and external stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p><b>Implementation of education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching methods and learning environments</li> <li>• Methods used to assess learning</li> <li>• Students' learning and wellbeing</li> <li>• Teachers' competence and occupational wellbeing</li> <li>• Participation of different personnel groups, students and external stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p><b>Effectiveness of quality work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitability of key evaluation methods and follow-up indicators and their impact on the achievement of goals.</li> </ul>	<p>The quality system shows a complete absence of or major shortcomings in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quality management procedures related to the planning of education</li> <li>• quality management procedures related to the implementation of education</li> <li>• participation of the institution's personnel groups, students or external stakeholders in the development of the operations or</li> <li>• effectiveness of the quality work.</li> </ul>	<p>The quality management procedures related to the planning of education are not fully functional and do not support the planning of education in a meaningful manner.</p> <p>The quality management procedures related to the implementation of education are not fully functional and do not support implementation in a meaningful manner.</p> <p>The personnel groups, students and external stakeholders are not involved in developing the operations in a meaningful manner.</p> <p>There is little evidence of the effectiveness of the quality work.</p>	<p>The quality management procedures related to the planning of education enhance the quality of planning and support planning itself.</p> <p>The quality management procedures related to the implementation of education enhance the quality of the implementation and support implementation itself.</p> <p>Personnel groups and students are involved in developing the operations in a meaningful manner. External stakeholders also participate in the development work.</p> <p>There is clear evidence of the effectiveness of the quality work.</p>	<p>The quality management procedures related to the planning of education are systematic and well-established and provide excellent support for planning.</p> <p>The quality management procedures related to the implementation of education are systematic and well-established and provide excellent support for implementation.</p> <p>Personnel groups and students are committed and very actively involved in the development of the operations. External stakeholders are also involved in the development work in a meaningful manner.</p> <p>There is clear and continuous evidence of the effectiveness of the quality work.</p>

**TARGETS**

**CRITERIA**

	ABSENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	ADVANCED
<p><b>6. The quality system as a whole</b></p>	<p>The HEI has only individual management procedures that do not form a structured system.</p> <p>There is no evidence of the procedures' impact on the development of the operations.</p>	<p>The quality management procedures do not form a functioning and unified system.</p> <p>The quality system encompasses some of the HEI's basic duties but does not provide meaningful support for the development of the operations. There is little evidence of the system's impact on the development of the operations.</p> <p>The institution's quality culture is only just emerging.</p>	<p>The quality management procedures constitute a functioning system.</p> <p>The quality system covers the essential parts of the basic duties of the HEI and provides meaningful support for the development of the operations. There is evidence that the system has an impact on the development of the operations.</p> <p>The development of the operations is based on an existing quality culture.</p>	<p>The quality management procedures form a dynamic and comprehensive system.</p> <p>The quality system covers all of the basic duties of the HEI and provides excellent support for the institution's overall strategy and the development of the entire institution's operations. There is clear and continuous evidence that the system has an impact on the development of the operations.</p> <p>The well-established quality culture provides excellent support for the development of the operations.</p>



## APPENDIX 2. The stages and timetable of the re-audit process

Negotiation between the HEI and FINEEC	21 December 2015
Appointment of the audit team	28 November 2016
Submission of the audit material	14 February 2017
Audit visit	11–12 April 2017
Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision on the result	16 June 2017
Concluding seminar	20 June 2017
Follow-up on the development work of the quality system	2020

## APPENDIX 3. Programme of the re-audit visit

<b>Tuesday 11 April 2017</b>	
08.30–9.30	Rectors and Vice Rectors
9.40–10.30	Deans of Faculties
10.40–11.30	Heads of Department
12.30–13.30	Teaching and research personnel
13.40–14.30	Students
13.40–14.30	Open University, continuing education, specialisation education and independent units
14.40–15.30	Support services key to quality management
15.40–16.20	University Board
16.30–17.20	External stakeholders
<b>Wednesday 12 April 2017</b>	
09.00–09.50	Thematic interview on the development of the quality system
10.10–11.00	Thematic interview on the quality management of societal impact and regional development work
11.20–11.50	Thematic interview on the quality system as a whole. Final interview with the Rector, Vice Rectors and Quality Manager
13.00–13.20	Preliminary feedback

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 achieve their strategic objectives and in directing future development activities in order to create a framework for the institutions' continuous development.

This report presents the re-audit process of the University of Turku and the results of the re-audit.

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