

AUDIT OF THE LAPPEENRANTA-LAHTI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY LUT

Authors **Håkan Wiklund, Irina Duma, Birgit Kraus, Matti Kuronen & Mirella Nordblad. Annikka Nurkka (ed.) Self-assessment of LUT.**

Year of publication **2021**, FINEEC publications **16:2021**

Language **English**

ISBN **978-952-206-704-3 pdf**

1.2 The implementation of education

- HEI's self-assessment

Equal procedures for applicants and students

LUT's education, admission criteria, number of study places by programme, and admission process are communicated on [LUT's website](#) and the national portal [Studyinfo](#). The related statistics are available in the national [Vipunen service](#), and information on the national joint application procedure for technology and business administration programmes is accessible in the online services [www.dia.fi](#) and [www.kauppatieteet.fi](#). The Vice-Rector for Education decides on student admissions, after which the applicants are informed of how the admission or transfer criteria were applied and how the decision can be appealed. Admission services guide the applicants throughout the processes. Applicants to DSc studies find information about the admission process in the [UNI portal](#) and receive support from the LUT Doctoral School.

[The LUT degree regulations](#) set the rules for degree education. Students can apply to include studies from other institutions and competence acquired in other ways into their degree. The procedure is communicated in the [UNI study portal](#) and introduction courses for new students, and supported by study counsellors. The decision to recognise informal learning (e.g. at work) is made by the teacher of a related LUT course.

Student learning in the centre of courses

The head of a programme oversees that course ILOs align with the programme content and ILOs. When designing a course, teachers first define the content, ILOs and student workload in ECTS

credits and then accordingly plan suitable learning activities and assessment methods. Most courses apply a variety of learning activities, such as traditional or flipped classroom lectures, exercises, learning assignments, laboratory work, projects, and real-life case studies.

At the beginning of a course, teachers often discuss the ILOs to encourage students' target-oriented studying and challenge students to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers are encouraged to foster an entrepreneurial mind-set in students and activate learning through assignments. Projects and theses support students' independent and co-operative learning and problem-solving with their peers, guided by teachers. Teachers often ask students for feedback halfway through the course and adapt their teaching accordingly.

Ways of giving feedback to students vary depending on the course. Teachers always give final grades and are also encouraged to give more specific, individual feedback. Teachers do this whenever possible and design different means to provide feedback even in mass courses. The thesis process includes feedback discussions between the student and the supervisor. However, surveys reveal that many students expect more feedback on their learning, which is challenging due to the increase in online teaching.

Connections with the world of work

To put theory to practice, many courses include cases from the world of work and invite visiting lecturers from companies. The assignments can concern field projects, real-life case studies or genuine problems of companies which require solutions. Most BSc degrees include a compulsory internship, and in MSc degrees, an internship may be included in elective studies. The majority of MSc theses are commissioned by business enterprises, and some dissertations also involve a business partner.

The university promotes corporate collaboration through [Career Services](#), the [Firmatiimi](#) corporate outreach team and the [J. Hyneman Center](#) and by organising recruitment events where students and employers meet. Career planning of DSc students is supported by [mentoring](#). LUT systematically monitors cooperation with corporate partners on courses. Monitoring proves that the cooperation is very active in every degree programme.

Individual study paths and support for students

Students have several opportunities to create an individual study path, which is supported by a personal study plan (PSP) and study guidance. The PSPs of BSc/MSc degree students are reviewed by study counsellors regularly to ensure their alignment with the degree structure. Elective and minor studies are the most common ways to add individual choices to a degree. LUT provides good possibilities to take part in student [exchange](#) and courses from other Finnish universities through the national [flexible study right system \(JOO\)](#) and [FiTech cooperation](#). Furthermore, LUT students can apply to [transfer](#) internally from one technology programme to another. For BSc graduates (from universities worldwide), LUT offers over 20 MSc programmes in English and MSc programmes for part-time students mostly in Finnish. For alumni, LUT offers

[continuous education modules](#) and [open university](#) studies.

[Study guidance](#) is provided throughout the studies. LUT's study guidance personnel comprises study counsellors, student advisors, study secretaries, teacher tutors and study counselling psychologists. The LUT Doctoral School's personnel review the tailored PSPs of DSc students and give related guidance. Open university and continuing education students have designated guidance personnel. [IT services](#) and information specialists at the [LUT Academic Library](#) help all students with their special study related questions.

The well-being committee representing staff, students and relevant stakeholders promotes well-being on the campuses based on an annual action plan on student health and health services, sports, tutoring and well-being activities on the campuses. The most prominent activities are the annual well-being weeks. Student well-being is also supported by [MOVEO campus sports](#) and gym and group exercises. Well-being of the students is monitored by graduate surveys, which have indicated that the well-being of LUT students is on good level in the national benchmark. However, the importance of well-being is emphasised in the strategic management.

Strengths

Enhancement areas

Constructive alignment in course implementation	Feedback to students on their learning
Cooperation with the world of work in education	Special career services and support for international students
Flexible study paths and exchange possibilities	Monitoring and supporting study progress

1.2 The implementation of education

- Assessment of the audit team

Transparent procedures to ensure student selection and recognition of prior learning

LUT ensures transparency in its student selection process. As mentioned above, LUT informs about criteria for student admission and selection on both the Finnish and English websites as well as on the national Studyinfo website. The relevant websites include deadlines for application and procedures for admission as well as contact information for further enquiries.

Prior learning is assessed and recognised according to the university's degree regulations, which includes credit transfer from other institutions as well as competences that were not obtained as a part of formal education. Procedures are transparent, and students reported that this procedure works well and regulations and procedures have been recently revised in accordance with the students.

A competence-based approach is used by teachers to align courses

The degree programme descriptions on the website give an overview of teaching methods and target-oriented learning. Samples from both Finnish- and English-taught programmes indicate a large variety of teaching and assessment methodologies. They comprise 'traditional' lectures and exams, but also group work, presentations, quizzes and continuous assessment. Teachers are up to date with modern instruction methodology and engage in individual advancement of the students, especially in practice-oriented learning environments such as laboratory work. Teachers are well aware of competence-based approaches and align their courses with the designated learning outcomes. This is certainly a strength in the university's provision of education. On the one hand, students' voices in the audit point out that the level of teaching may vary considerably for various reasons: A teacher might teach the course for the first time or be very busy with his or her research. On the other hand, there are also numerous examples of understanding, flexible, and student-oriented teachers. Students are obviously satisfied with the various interactive assignments, but they would like to have more facilities for group work, as both library and lunchroom are often too crowded.

Feedback on learning challenges teachers

Discussions among students and teachers during the audit visit touched on the aspect of heterogeneity within the student group, which might lead to different expectations and different capacities to organise oneself. The university provides students with digital information on studying efficiently and emphasises individual responsibility within the learning process. According to the course descriptions, many courses include both individual and group assignments as continuous assessment, which ensures constant feedback on personal learning progress. Teachers point out that the personal contact in the familiar atmosphere usually makes direct feedback easy but emphasise as well that students should familiarise themselves with the intended learning outcomes of the course more systematically. In return, students told that the amount and periodicity of feedback may vary considerably between degree programmes, teachers and courses.

The connection to professional life is promoted

The needs of working life are present in courses through practical assignments and laboratory work but also case studies with real companies. Company visits and presentations from companies on methods of product analysis and development introduce students to the world of work as well. There are also regular consultations with industry partners on programme-specific boards. Teachers use company projects in order to check their course content for industrial

relevance. Feedback from future potential employers (also concerning prospective topics and perceivable trends in the respective branch) help to include working life relevant issues. Teachers pointed out that it is difficult, however, to practice soft skills—which are particularly important for working life—in an online environment. Despite this, teachers use their networks within the professional practice for enhancing courses. They also profit from doctoral students with practical experience, who introduce a new perspective to courses. In general, students appreciate the inclusion of work-related issues and the work in international student teams. However, some of the students reported during the audit visit that they would like to have even more practical assignments and more case studies as well as more support when entering the job market. According to the students, professors and teachers with a professional career only within the university could profit from more real-life projects, professional certificates or even industrial internships for the enhancement of their courses.

The university degree regulations include paragraphs on the recognition of studies at other higher education institutions. According to the degree programme descriptions, students may undertake part of their specialisation studies abroad. Besides, in accordance with the university degree regulations, all students receive a personal study plan that supports students in organising themselves. Students told during the audit visit that there is even a special exam room, where a student can schedule exams individually according to his or her personal timetable.

The well-being of students is promoted throughout their study path

The university offers various counselling and support services along the entire student life cycle, which cover study orientation, studies abroad and entering the job market. Counselling takes place in private meetings upon appointment with the study councillor, information specialist or in group meetings. There are special offers for doctoral students to ensure a good start within the programme. According to the interviews, the university regularly collects feedback data for continuous improvement, and support services discuss the results with both schools and student representatives. In case of stress or the risk of burnout, students may contact the study counselling psychologist. The personal study plan is an important tool for continuous guidance, as it is revised regularly. The university assures the well-being of students through various activities throughout the academic year. The student union systematically informs students about sports and the annual well-being week in both Finnish and English. There are also health services for students, including health weeks that address special issues such as mental health.

The university has recently updated its equality and discrimination plan, which contains actions for enhancing equality, such as improving international students' representation in administrative bodies and guidelines on inappropriate conduct. The interviewees mentioned that the student union appointed harassment contact personnel.