

# AUDIT OF HäME UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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## 1.3 The evaluation and enhancement of education

### - Högskolans självvärdering

#### Education is evaluated and managed on a knowledge-based manner

Education is monitored with quantitative and qualitative indicators. The staff have access to information produced by the feedback system, the information describing the activities and outcomes in the BI system, and the Peppi system (e.g., credit accumulation). The feedback and indicator information helps to anticipate, detect and intervene in unwanted developments in time. E.g., interruptions in studies or quality problems related to study modules can be anticipated based on data describing the progress of studies and observations made by the module team.

The operations are evaluated and developed in the HAMK Management Group, the Education Development Group, the unit management teams, the groups of heads of degree programmes and study counsellors, and degree programme staff meetings. Self-evaluations are carried out regularly. Monitoring and self-evaluation activities produce signals that are important for development. This information is used in management by objectives system.

The quality and performance of education are strongly linked. HAMK has invested in educational models and the enhancement of the staff's pedagogical capabilities through the HAMK100 programme. The results can be seen as impact and performance (e.g., the indicator of degrees completed on time). Continuous evaluation, experiments and development of operating methods at all levels from module teams to the institution's management, play a key role in maintaining performance.

## Collecting feedback is comprehensive, indicator data complements the situational picture

Feedback is collected from all stakeholders in several ways and for different purposes. Through the feedback system, students and employers participate in developing the quality of education.

**Student feedback** is collected with systems in a planned manner during the studies, at the graduation stage (Graduand Feedback Questionnaire) and five years after graduation (Career Monitoring Survey). The qualitative feedback in interaction is also part of a functional quality and feedback culture. This feedback information is extracted from the students in the Rector's students' hearings and at the Meet the Dean events. In degree programmes' joint feedback discussions, the students and the head of the DP discuss themes related to education. Feedback received in these events is documented and used as part of development work.

The diversity of the feedback system, the more systematic use of the information, and increasing responsiveness have been areas for development. Therefore from autumn 2021, module feedback is collected through the Spark system allowing the feedback to be quickly linked to development (affecting the following modules) and giving feedback on feedback. The module feedback system is currently the smoothest part of the education feedback system.

The performance and quality of education is also monitored with **indicators** describing the activities. The performance indicators are compiled into BI tools to support management and planning of operations. Indicator entities that are essential for work have been built for the staff groups in different roles. The impact of the education is monitored with indicators (e.g., credit accumulation/student and /education, graduating on time, forecast tools for graduation, number of labour market connections in the modules). The utilisation rate of BI tools has increased steadily over the past few years.

## Continuous evaluation guides the development of education

The curricula and contents of the DPs, the achievement of the learning objectives and the impact of the educational activities are continuously evaluated. The education is evaluated based on versatile information produced by feedback and measurements, and the necessary development measures will be launched as part of the **management of all HAMK** and its units. Heads of DPs and module teams evaluate the modules based on study feedback and take development measures within strategic policies. Through the available information and evaluation, the pedagogical management monitors the progress of the objectives in the curricula and the implementation of the education according to the annual planning cycle and launches development work at a strategic level.

**The representatives of employers** assess the student's competences in several stages of studies (module projects, implementation according to the Entrepreneurial University concept, work placements and theses). Employers regularly evaluate the students' capabilities and module contents in workplace audits. Employers affect the curriculum work via the feedback

system and consequently also the contents and implementation of education.

Internal and external assessment activities produce targeted information to support development. **Evaluations** are carried out regularly. The evaluation activities are diverse and the need for harmonisation is identified in the ways in which the evaluations are carried out, the division of responsibilities and the practical implementation of development proposals. The development of education has unified procedures and structures, yet the need for further harmonisation can still be identified. Examples of the functionality of evaluation and development are the improved accessibility of education, the stronger link between the labour market and education, and better responsiveness to the needs of different learners. Through development and changes, the impact of HAMK's education has been enhanced.

### **Strengths**

Feedback is systematically collected from different actors and is utilised in decision making.

Tools of knowledge management are up to date.

### **Enhancement areas**

Further clarifying the implementation and responsibilities of evaluation activities

The utilisation of the collected data and its transition into real development measures will, in part, remain superficial.

## 1.3 The evaluation and enhancement of education

### - Auditeringsgruppens bedömning

#### Enhancement of education is based on evident data and feedback

Evaluation and further development of HAMK's educational provision is based on various channels of feedback as well as institutional data. In the interviews, employers and students, as well as staff, showed their proactive participation in developing the contents of education. This strong involvement of teachers, students, and external stakeholders in both the planning and the programme development was confirmed in the interviews as well as in the additional material. Up-to-date research data and the future skills needs are taken account in the degree programmes. Especially the student workshops pointed out and valued the good programme planning and the clear opportunities for various forms of feedback in degree programmes as well as the responsiveness of the heads of the degree programmes.

In general, the student feedback explicitly underlined their satisfaction with their role in the curriculum development and renewal process, indicating that the studies are very useful, practical, diverse and future-oriented. Important assessment data are derived from regular course feedback. Data sets are made available to all stakeholders for this purpose, including metrics, statistics, course evaluation information, and graduate studies. HAMK not only focuses

on quantitative data (i.e., the National Graduation and feedback questionnaire and Career - monitoring survey) but also on qualitative dialogues with students when they participate in so-called development groups and boards. The continuous improvement of teaching and study quality through regular didactic training in HAMK100 and keeping the curricula up to date are also explicitly anchored in HAMK's vision and can thus also be taken as a guiding principle. The documents also show that the underlying system is continuously being expanded and optimised.

From autumn 2021, module feedback is collected through the Spark system, allowing the feedback to be quickly linked to development affecting the following modules and giving feedback on feedback. Overall, the audit team concludes that HAMK uses a systematic approach for the enhancement of education that meets the requirements. The participation of teaching staff and students, administrative staff and graduates is ensured. Beyond the description of the processes in the self-evaluation report, HAMK was thus able, through the interviews, to clarify the systematisation of the further development of their study programmes.

HAMK has implemented various opportunities for students and staff to gather feedback on different levels within the institution. The interviews confirmed that feedback is an important aspect for HAMK in the focus of enhancement of education. One example of good practice is the Meet the Dean events. In these informal meetings students can discuss their concerns and opinions, showing the importance of student feedback for HAMK. HAMK's motto, "It is an important value for us that they are heard", was underlined in the interviews. In addition to the exchange with the deans, further discussion and reflection processes concerning the development of study quality were initiated within the schools. Through these various channels of feedback, students can also evaluate the support services offered, such as counselling, tutoring or career advice and mobility options. The interviews showed that student support services are also further developed based on student feedback and aim at directly responding to the needs of the learners.

Especially in the process of developing and optimising a module, student and teacher feedback is gathered. HAMK gathers feedback regularly and reacts upon the feedback in systematic ways, but the transparency to students about follow-up actions could be more structured and consistent. Students receive grades for modules that they have completed. The teacher gives each student an individual grade even if the work was carried out in a group or as common project assignments. HAMK teachers are encouraged to discuss feedback with their students systematically. Hence, a point of development, also indicated by students in the workshop and in the interviews of the student representatives, is the provision of feedback on their grades. In this context, it was also mentioned that teachers should be more proactive in pointing out student errors.

Through the documents provided as well as the interviews with various groups of internal and external stakeholders, the audit team gained convincing evidence that HAMK has consistently pursued the process of continuous improvement. This stringent and long-term focus on quality improvement has not only shaped HAMK's programmes as being up to market needs, student-centered and competence oriented, but also HAMK's profile as truly work-place oriented HE

institution.

## Continuous learning is a strategic development target

Continuous learning is a strategic field for HAMK. As mentioned in HAMK's vision and strategy statement, HAMK students are owners of their own learning, and teachers act as instructors and enablers of learning. The interviews confirmed that the modules are well structured, based on three study models, so that it is possible to build new degree programmes or parts of degree programmes flexibly for new target groups of continuous learning without making changes to HAMK's operating licence.

The audit team encourage HAMK to further develop different forms of continuous learning on a more systematic basis to foster lifelong learning, i.e., in the open university of applied sciences, specialisation studies and other further training. The audit team see the newly reformed continuous learning brand, HAMK Up, as a promising example of how to establish continuous learning trainings as regular learning experiences for those who want to gain further competences and knowledge in a specific field. This programme widens the range and diversity of training.

The benefits of digitalisation are utilised in teaching and guidance, i.e., by using digital literature as study packages from the library. This should be aimed at not only focusing on those people who want to raise their education level but for all potential groups.