KANSALLINEN KOULUTUKSEN ARVIOINTIKESKUS
NATIONELLA CENTRET FÖR UTBILDNINGSUTVÄRDERING
FINNISH EDUCATION EVALUATION CENTRE

AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

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1.3 The evaluation and enhancement of education

- Korkeakoulun itsearviointi

Managing education through data

The university’s student feedback system is described in the attached table.

Feedback system			
Survey	**Content**	**Implementation**	**Timing from 1st of August 2022**
Finnish bachelor's graduate survey	Studying and learning, teaching arrangements, degree requirements, feedback and assessment, general working life competences	National feedback survey UEF: Student and Learning Services	Continuous
Career survey	Satisfaction with the degree, career as a whole, situation at the time of graduating and current situation, quality of employment, job and competence	National feedback survey UEF: Student and Learning Services	Every year
Career survey aimed at doctoral graduates	Doctoral degree education, situation in the labour market and finding employment, current employment relationship and its quality, the development needs of doctoral degree education	National feedback survey UEF: Student and Learning Services	Every year
Course feedback	Develop the way course is taught	UEF: Teachers	After the course
Guidance and counselling survey at the beginning of studies	Expectations for guidance, the implementation of guidance, and the issues for which the student sought guidance	UEF: Student and Learning Services	Every two years
Survey on the realisation of diversity, inclusiveness and equal opportunities in studying	Accessibility of studies, equal opportunities in teaching and studying, experiences of discrimination, well-being in studies, and guidance and support for studies	UEF: Student and Learning Services	Unestablished
Employment survey	Finding employment, quality of employment, skills, unemployment, and the assessment of teaching and studies	UEF: Student and Learning Services	Every three years
Survey aimed at doctoral students	Doctoral degree studies and progress of studies, guidance and support, financing, internationalization, visions for future, functions of doctoral school and its programmes	UEF: Doctoral school	Every two years
Departments´, schools' and subjects´ own practices	Survey-specific content	UEF: Departments, schools, subjects, Student and Learning Services	Departments´, schools' and subjects´ own practices

Figure 6 Student feedback system

Main objective of the university's knowledge management work is to develop a repository-based reporting and analytics environment to support the university leadership and other staff in management and the development of the university's activities. A number of different reports, for example reports about research funding and graduating students have been made to support the management of education and training. Reporting will focus on student selection during the next phase.

Subject studies have several different methods for providing feedback at the group and individual level. For example departments organise feedback days. The Academic Rector's decision on course feedback was issued on 29 March 2022. At the university level, the newly piloted course feedback system allows for counter feedback. Responding to feedback motivates people to give

feedback. The new feedback tool improves these responses.

Feedback can be given anonymously. Student organisations and the Student Union have the opportunity to provide feedback, which then processed by the relevant university function in the education management system. Feedback surveys are organised on a regular basis to encourage students to give feedback. Some university departments also have student tutoring activities and this support lowers the threshold for giving feedback.

During the Student Union's Smile and Complain Week, students have the opportunity to anonymously give feedback to the Student Union, the university, the health service, caterers, or any other party that affects student life. All feedback is forwarded to the subject of the feedback. In addition, teachers and subject studies are able to collect feedback through various methods, such as feedback sessions or other verbal feedback. Feedback responses can be given to students after a course and during a course in relation to any changes in the delivery of the course when the next course is organised.

Depending on student feedback, it is analysed at various management levels, such as Council for Teaching and Guidance, the faculties' Committee on development of degree education, the academic subject or the department in question in another agreed manner, such as separate feedback sessions. Students are involved in all aspects of the university's activities in which feedback is discussed and further measures are agreed, for example to improve content, teaching methods or practices.

The results of the national career monitoring and candidate feedback are systematically analysed by institutions and departments as a basis for teaching development.

Teaching is monitored and evaluated annually in university management reviews, based on teaching measures. In the faculties, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching is carried out by the Committees on development of degree education.There are also departmental/unit-specific approaches to monitoring and evaluating teaching. More detailed monitoring and evaluation of training is carried out at the faculty and departmental level, and, for example, the needs for curriculum development emerge from these more detailed analyses. The use of feedback time series is part of the degree programme's monitoring and evaluation processes. The Council for Teaching and Guidance discusses and, if necessary, outlines the necessary measures at the university level.

The university rectors and student services management team meet regularly with the Student Union Board and the student associations. These meetings are interactive and giving and receiving feedback is a natural part of the process. Students have representatives in various educational management levels such as faculties' and departments' education development committees/quality team to give feedback, and students are auditors in internal audits. Doctoral researchers have representatives on the Doctoral School's management team.

The extent, scope, and orientation of higher education is controlled nationally. The university has responded to the national increase in student numbers by permanently adding almost 400

places. In addition, 168 starting places were temporarily added due to the coronavirus pandemic. In autumn 2021, the university launched a speech therapy course in response to the need for speech therapists in Eastern Finland. In particular, the need to launch engineering education in Eastern Finland, driven by the needs of businesses in the region, led the university to apply for responsibility for technical and scientific education.

The university offers a wide range of specialised training courses and stand-alone studies where students can deepen their expertise. These courses are mainly aimed at people who are working, have a university degree or equivalent qualifications.

The Centre for Continuous Learning, Open University, and continuing professional education are part of the university's educational provision. The university is the second largest provider of open university studies in Finland. Strong cooperation between upper secondary schools increases the effectiveness of the operations. In 2021, 52 upper secondary schools were cooperation partners.

University graduates (all levels) can apply for continuous learner status.

The university's support services develop its activities from the perspective of continuous improvement. Feedback from students and stakeholders is taken up in the appropriate bodies and used to improve the way we work.

Strengths	**Enhancement areas**
Extensive provision of continuous learning, closely linked to degree programmes	Systematising the student feedback process, making use of feedback more visible
Students are able to have an influence through multiple channels and are involved in various committees and development work	Developing learning analytics
Responding quickly to society's training needs	Establishing support services for international training
Opportunities in the open education pathway	Developing a monitoring and evaluation model for doctoral training
Operational model for the continuous right to study	

1.3 The evaluation and enhancement of education

- Auditointiryhmän arvio

As mentioned in the SAR, UEF collects feedback data at different levels by using different methods. There are, for example, feedback days in the departments during the student union's Smile and Complain Week. Students can give anonymous feedback to the student union, the university, the health service, the caterer, or any other party that has an impact on student life. Student feedback is analysed at different levels of management, e.g., the Teaching and Advising Council, the Faculty Course Development Committee, the academic subject, or the department. Students are involved in the decision-making bodies, which gives them the opportunity to make their voices heard. They are also involved in feedback system processes and designing feedback systems. This is confirmed in the audit interviews by the students, the teaching staff, and the deans. The deans in particular underline the assumption that there is good progress in developing a coherent quality management system regarding student feedback.

Students reported that feedback was widely collected, but experiences varied in whether they reported that their feedback was listened to. Students' experiences with feedback are predominantly positive: students stated that feedback was welcome, and that there were multiple mechanisms to provide feedback. Students sometimes saw the results of their feedback in changes to programs or courses. However, some students have the feeling that feedback was systematically ignored or clearly undesired by certain faculty members. Student representatives also mentioned that in some cases UEF is not interested in comprehensive feedback.

Feedback on feedback to students (i.e., information about changes introduced because of student feedback) is not provided regularly. As a student noted during the audit visit, this is only offered in some degree programmes. However, interviews revealed that university management is aware of this problem and working on it. Another challenge is to encourage students to give feedback. Feedback fatigue is often reported in the audit visit, but this may be due to a lack of regular feedback on feedback in the sense that those giving feedback do not recognise the value of their feedback. Feedback fatigue can also be a sign that feedback requests should be targeted and clearly valuable. Against this background the audit team views student feedback – collecting, accepting, and responding to it – as an area of development for UEF. The audit team recommends a critical evaluation of feedback strategies and procedures and the introduction of more systematic feedback on feedback.

As stated in the SAR, the university regularly monitors and evaluates the degree programmes and other education provision. Various measures are used, like employment analyses and surveys, but as some university representatives explained, it is difficult to do this in a coherent way. This also applies to the evaluation of links to working life. This is easier for programmes with a vocational focus than for more general programmes. Learning success in terms of employment is monitored, but there is room for improvement. The audit team recommends that UEF should monitor learning outcomes and processes more systematically. A learning analytics system to analyse and support individual student learning is being discussed at the university but is not yet in place. Regarding the goal of implementing individual learning paths, the control of individual

learning processes as well as the assessment of individual learning success is important.

As mentioned during the audit visit, UEF follows the approach of combining the competences of the staff with the strategic objectives of the institution. For example, UEF has combined career guidance with the help of professors from the Philosophical Faculty. The university services have their own surveys such as regular surveys on well-being. New staff and administrative personnel were recruited to address this issue. This is a good example of how staff feedback leads to change.