

# AUDIT OF HANKEN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Authors **Oliver Vettori, Crina Damşa, Hanna Maula, Alexander Myers & Mirella Nordblad. Hanken self-assessment (eds.) Tove Ahlskog-Pursiainen & Katarina Valkama.**

Year of publication **2023**, FINEEC publications **19:2023**

Language **English**

ISBN **978-952-206-797-5 pdf**

## 1.1 The planning of education

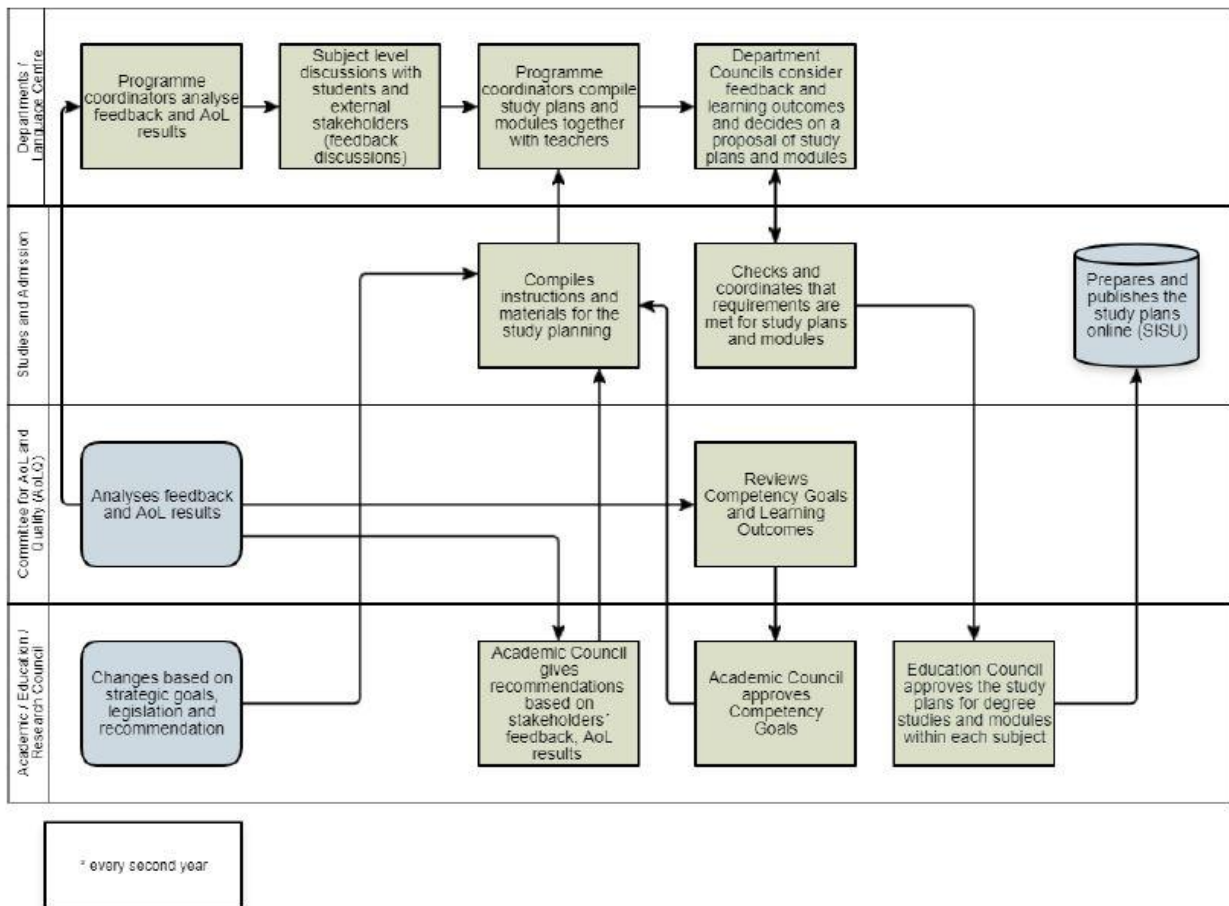
### - HEI's self-assessment

#### Programmes

The degrees offered and the degree requirements are stated in the [Degree Regulations](#). The regulations and the programme offering are decided by the board. The Academic Council defines [competency goals](#) for all programmes, covering knowledge in four general knowledge and competence areas: economic sciences, analytical and critical thinking skills, communication skills, and global competences. The goals are formulated in line with the Decree on University Degrees and the National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules, and reflect the strategy, where Hanken positions itself as a research-driven, internationally oriented business school with strong connections with practice, promoting ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability. Hanken's mission is to educate responsible professionals, embracing both the responsibility to educate business graduates fluent in Swedish and a high degree of internationalisation. Thus, Hanken offers a broad choice of majors in Swedish (all degree levels) and a selection of programmes in English (all but BSc). The establishment of new programmes (decided by the board) is a significant task and involves deliberations across different bodies: the Management Team, the External Stakeholder Advisory Board, the International Advisory Board, the Academic Council, and the academic community at large.

Every two years, the Education Council approves the study plans, i.e. requirements, course offering and structure of the modules of the major and minor subjects and the specialised MSc programmes. The planning process has been improved by systematising feedback management and clarifying responsibilities for coordination, while the formal decision-making process has remained the same. The suggestions to the Education Council are made by the department councils and Steering Committee of the Language Centre, who also decide on the detailed course

descriptions with revisions made yearly, as needed. The proposals are prepared by the teachers together with a programme coordinator. The role of programme coordinators synchronising the courses is new to the subject based study plans and is expected to strengthen a holistic alignment of the programmes. The administration provides the departments, subjects and language centre with data, instructions, and support for the planning. The Teaching Lab continuously supports Hanken's teachers in planning courses, digitalising teaching, using tools efficiently, with pedagogical training etc.



Strengthening corporate world connections is one of Hanken's strategic goals. Hanken has an External Stakeholder Advisory Board (ESAB), which gives input to topical issues and information on expectations of the business community. For instance, in November 2022 a workshop was held with ESAB to secure input to the planning of a possible new English BSc programme. In search for a common model for stakeholder input on subject and programme level, a model with subject-specific feedback discussions with students and external stakeholders was piloted during the spring 2022. The Academic Council has decided that similar feedback discussions shall be organised bi-yearly, before the study plan revision process, next time in 2024-25. The aim is that stakeholder input is systematically obtained, and feedback discussed in all programmes and subjects.

Hanken has a comprehensive process of [Assurance of Learning](#) to ensure that students can demonstrate achievement against stated learning outcomes at programme levels, and to support

continuous data-driven improvement of teaching and learning.

## Curriculum management

The minimum requirements for what a course description must contain are set in the [Rules of procedure for studies and examination](#) and include learning goals, level, possible prerequisites and limitations as to the right to participate, the department and subject responsible, the examiner, the language of instruction, course literature, scheduled contact hours, teaching methods, forms of examination, and assessment. Student feedback and guidelines of indicative work hours for different tasks support calculating the workload of student activities, i.e. contact teaching hours and estimated hours of individual and/or teamwork (preparation for lessons, exam/s, written assignments, presentations etc.). Through following a recommended course of study and observing prerequisites and/or recommendations on supporting courses, the students can avoid a course becoming too burdensome. Sometimes pre-course formative assignments are used to check sufficient prior knowledge for a course.

Faculty have high autonomy in planning their teaching. Methods are developed based on experiences regarding learning outcomes, student feedback, peer feedback, and discussions among colleagues. Assessment rubrics in key courses have been developed through the AoL process. Almost all teachers are active researchers, teaching courses in areas where they are pursuing their research. The initiative for new courses often comes from faculty when new topics are on the fore in research. International content, classroom, learning experiences, and collaborations are integrated parts of the programmes. The BSc degree includes a mandatory semester or internship abroad, and the curriculum planning creates a “mobility window”. International faculty (Hanken employed and visiting) and mixing international degree and exchange students with domestic students contribute to the internationalisation of Hanken.

Targeted modules and MOOCs have been created around topics of interest for a continuous learning audience. Separate open university courses are offered in basic courses with a high demand, and quotas for non-degree students are offered on most courses.

### Strengths

Content informed by state of the art in research  
Involvement of support services in course preparations and planning and continuous support in pedagogical and digital development  
Strong connection to strategy through Competency Goals and Learning Outcomes for all programmes

### Enhancement areas

Increasing collaboration between teachers and across subjects  
More systematic follow-up of feedback and stakeholder input for course development uniformly across subjects

# 1.1 The planning of education

## - Assessment of the audit team

### Curriculum development is well-structured and involves different stakeholders

Defining competency goals and the processes of curriculum development and approval takes place through thorough processes, which provide a solid basis for the planning of education. The involvement of a wide range of units and actors in the process (Management Team, Academic Council, External Stakeholder Advisory Board, Department Councils, programme coordinators and students) allows for a broad representation of perspectives and interests. The revision or renewal of degree programmes is organised every second year. The curriculum development process also includes students, who can provide input to curricula through their student representatives in various Hanken bodies at the university and at department level, and via the student union. In addition, administrative units support the process, amongst others, by providing information generated through quality management processes as well as advice on didactical matters.

The degree programmes are framed in line with the criteria outlined by the National Framework for Qualifications. The course descriptions are regulated through a set of rules of procedure for studies and examinations which cover legal, procedural and pedagogical matters. The planning of education also takes into account the resources at Hanken, which leads to the conclusion that the process can be characterised as smart planning, being resource-driven as much as strategy-driven.

Hanken has implemented a system of Assurance of Learning (AoL), which supports the assessment and documenting of learning outcomes at the programme level, and a data-driven approach to evaluating teaching and learning. The AoL process covers the general competency goals of the programmes. AoL is also used as a tool for curriculum management (see sections 1.3 and 3.1 for a detailed discussion and assessment of the AoL). The audit visit revealed good practices in its implementation, but also that the AoL process covers only part of the competency goals of a programme and of the strategic areas for teaching. 'Closing the loop' is recommended across all courses and teaching initiatives, where feedback and evaluations serve as direct input into programme revision and are responded to and become a systematic practice.

### Mandatory curriculum to be connected to institutional strategy on sustainability

The education provision is connected to the institutional strategy in several ways, although, the impact differs among programmes and types of initiatives related to education. The impact of the institutional strategy is visible in the regular education provision, for example, in the teaching of labour market relevant skills. The strategy is less clearly implemented in the provision that

addresses sustainability and emerging societal challenges. The audit visit revealed greater and more concrete efforts to include sustainability as a topic in some programmes, but clearly less in other programmes. The education provision addressing this thematic area seems more person-dependent; highly regarded academics disseminate research knowledge and some deep-impact initiatives that appear more isolated than cross-cutting. Together with the mandatory course included in the bachelor's (BSc) and master's (MSc) programmes, these were framed as the institution's primary provision on this strategic area.

A gap was identified between the belief that this strategic area is being sufficiently addressed, the strategic goals on sustainability and responsibility (one of the key learning outcomes) and the way the current education provision in mandatory courses has the potential to match the strategic goals and ensure students' deep learning. Success depends on the willingness of those involved in the programme development process to take up new impulses. This could be promoted by additional efforts from the side of the management, through a better understanding of what is meant with sustainability and what it means for education, and through implementation that is more anchored in the various levels of the institution (see also Section 2.2). The audit team recommends that Hanken considers a more integrated approach to sustainability, where competency goals and education about sustainability are built into various courses at different levels (both BSc and MSc), in addition to offering the generic, mandatory courses and specific project-based initiatives (as per today).

Continuous learning is a theme given some attention at Hanken and is considered to some extent when planning education. Hanken's Open University offers basic-level courses in business and economics suited for everyone, without formal requirements on prior degrees, while the intermediate and advanced level have requirements related to previous studies of the subject. As mentioned in the self-assessment, Hanken owns the Hanken & SSE Executive Education Ltd. together with Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) and offers executive programmes with a global reach. There remains some unclarities on how continuous learners are accommodated in terms of intake, education provision and follow-up. The need to have a clear institutional strategy on continuous learning, including Hanken's Open University, cross-institutional studies and the joint Digivisio 2030 programme creating an open and sustainable learning ecosystem in Finland, was also recognised in the university's documentation available for the audit team.

## A systematic research-based approach to education and updating of the curricula to be implemented institution-wide

The connection of research to teaching and learning as well as the research-based nature of education was emphasised explicitly in the self-assessment report and during the audit visit. The staff members involved in teaching at the university are directly involved in research, which is assumed to ensure a connection between research and curriculum and teaching. Testimonies of research interests and knowledge being translated into the curriculum were provided by several participants in the audit. The flexibility with which individual courses can be implemented enables teachers to adapt their courses to the current state of the art of research in the field. Teachers' autonomy in selecting course content and building on their own research was repeatedly

emphasised during the visit. There are many indications that this autonomy contributes to the relative flexibility in the curriculum development and contents being updated easily as teachers assess needs for change.

Concurrently, the audit visit revealed the drawbacks of this considerable autonomy. One is the differences between courses, with some courses being up to date in terms of research-based contents, as the respective teachers dynamically engage with recent research and developments in their disciplinary area. Other courses, however, were reported to be unchanged in terms of content for several years and not up to date in terms of more recent development in the research and disciplinary area. Discussion with the board and student representatives revealed an understanding of how Hanken will be impacted by fast-paced societal and technological developments, in particular digital technologies such as AI, in terms of the competencies and the employability of future graduates. Hanken is taking measures to better integrate analytics in teaching at Hanken. For instance, the topic was addressed in the last annual dialogues with the rector. Hanken also has a Quantum Laboratory, a data lab which offers access to databases, organises events and courses, but also collaborates with industry and conducts research. Considering the magnitude and pace of change in this field, it will require further attention at the institutional level.

Overall, Hanken should consider a more systematic, institution-wide approach to research-based education, from planning to evaluation, where both teachers' autonomy and the relevance of all education provision is ensured. This requires, firstly, a clear and relatively shared understanding of research-based education at the institutional level within and across units. Secondly, it requires concrete approaches to develop a more research-based, up to date curriculum for all education provision. Experience sharing among those involved in curriculum development across programmes and units may be a strategy to raise awareness of differences and the need to shared understanding.

## Relevance to work life, internationalisation and mobility are embedded across all curricula in a systematic way

Relevance to work life and internationalisation are strongly embedded in the university's strategy, the degree programmes and activities, and the setup of the study administration. At the strategic level, the university covers relevance to work life and internationalisation in its strategic goals and identifies these as strategic priorities in its education provision. The strategic importance accorded to internationalisation is visible in the form of a mandatory semester of studying abroad for all Hanken students. The mandatory semester abroad enhances internationalisation in an excellent way. It has proved its benefits for students in terms of competence development, network development as well as a broader understanding of the global business landscape and its challenges. International cooperation is furthermore used to enhance education provision at the university beyond matters of internationalisation.

Internationalisation is also visible in Hanken's educational offer for international students, which are provided the same study opportunities and follow-up as the local students. Among the

possibilities for further development in this area, internationalisation “at home”, is one of the aspects that could be considered for further development. The challenge of keeping international graduates in Finland was highlighted during the audit visit and in audit documentation, which may require more attention for measures to support students in learning the language and being involved in local professional networks already during their study period (see Section 4.1 for further discussion on this topic).

Both the audit documentation and the audit visit revealed that the connection to work life is very clear and that ties with the business community are maintained and capitalised upon. Formal agreements with various internship partners from the business community as well as close ties with Hanken alumni create good opportunities for input from work life into the curriculum and study-related activities. This connection is represented through elective courses and course formats implemented in various projects and initiatives. Work life connections are also created and maintained through work life days, career guidance, expert lectures on work life, traineeships and thesis work in companies. Internships as part of undergraduate and graduate degrees support the formation of connections with work life. Students are also supported in being engaged in society-relevant projects.

There is an ongoing process to involve corporate world representatives in discussions about future labour market needs and to anticipate changes in the Hanken environment both locally and globally. Feedback discussions with external stakeholders are now systematically arranged every second year at the subject level, and once to twice a year at the university level in the External Stakeholder Advisory Board. Some of the labour market representatives interviewed reported that they have provided input or are participating in the development of a new bachelor’s programme. It appears that especially in the planned bachelor’s programme that is to be taught in English inputs from and cooperation with the labour market have been systematically sought. However, less concrete involvement in renewing existing programmes were mentioned by the interviewees. The audit team recommends more systematic use of stakeholder expertise, especially in renewing its existing programmes. More specifically, in this area, a clearer framing of how these activities and components are linked to learning outcomes, knowledge and competences to be acquired by the students, and how they are relevant for work life could be considered. The audit team also recommends strengthening the implementation of processes of ongoing reflection on future competency goals. The know-how of staff regarding the various procedures implemented could also be more transparent and accessible across campuses.