

AUDIT OF METROPOLIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Authors **Andreas Breinbauer, Birgit Kraus, Ilkka Pollari, Mari Ruadze, Marja-Liisa Saarilampi and Niina Nurkka** Self-evaluation of Metropolia University of Applied Sciences edited by **Virve Kentta, Eeva Viitanen and Anna Zaikova**

Year of publication **2023**, FINEEC publications **9:2023**

Language **English**

ISBN **ISBN 978-952-206-760-9 pdf**

1.3 The evaluation and enhancement of education

- HEI's self-assessment

Multiple avenues for student feedback

Metropolia collects student feedback via several channels. Degree students may use various feedback channels at different stages of their studies (figure 8) and after graduation. Students in other learning solutions provide feedback at the end of their studies. In addition to course feedback, students can submit open feedback through the workspace in the OMA intranet. Twice a year, non-degree students provide feedback on how the customer process functions and on how willing they are to recommend the studies.

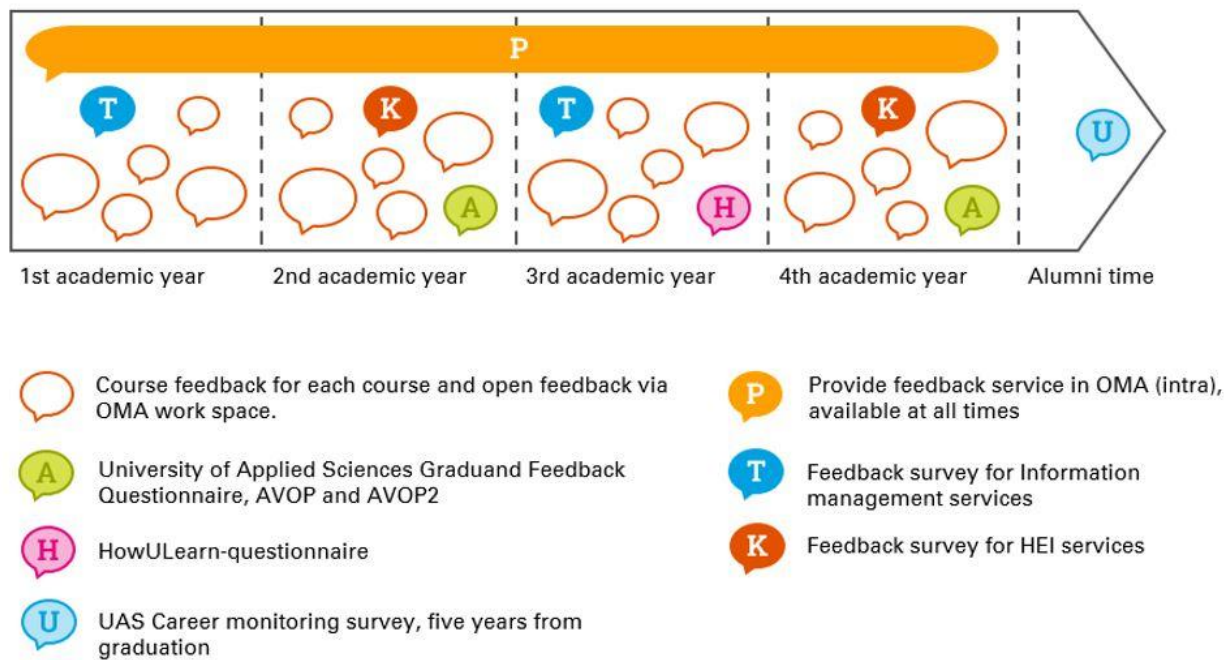


Figure 8 Metropolia's student feedback system

The response rate in the course feedback survey has been low, and the practices regarding reciprocal feedback are teacher- and degree-specific. The new course feedback will be implemented in the autumn of 2022. The process of reciprocal feedback is in place, but self-assessment has shown that it is necessary to reactivate it after the pandemic.

In 2019 and 2020, Metropolia tested the HowULearn questionnaire intended for all degree students. The questionnaire, based on theories of university-level learning and research on higher education, will be implemented in autumn 2022. Students answer this survey once during their studies. It provides information on students' learning experiences. It also enables the students to receive personalized feedback and guidance that supports learning and studying. HowULearn includes a joint workshop for students and personnel.

Graduates provide feedback in the national UAS graduand feedback questionnaire (AVOP). To accelerate the development cycle of education, the AVOP questionnaire has been adjusted for students in their second academic year (AVOP2). The annual UAS Career Monitoring Survey gives information about alumni who graduated five years ago and are in working life. It describes the employment rate of the alumni, the career opportunities received through education and the alignment of the studies with the needs of professional life. It also offers the alumni an opportunity to influence the development of education.

Academic Services collect feedback from students and personnel on their services through questionnaires every two years. The feedback is processed in Academic Services' team meetings. Increasing cooperation between the Academic Services and Education has been one area of development. Information Management Services collect feedback from students and personnel regarding their services every two years.

In self-assessment, feedback system and culture as a whole were identified as an enhancement area. Open feedback provided by students and the feedback received through student associations indicates a concern that the given feedback has no impact. In addition, compiling feedback data from different sources requires the mastery of several different tools and the process for using the information in the development varies in degree programmes. Based on the self-assessment, the development of the feedback system has been selected as a focal point for the work of Metropolia's quality group (see 3.3) in autumn 2022.

Management systems and procedures support assessment and development

Education consists of ten schools and two development units that support the operations and are managed by the Director of Lifelong Learning. Operations are managed according to the PDCA cycle (figure 9).

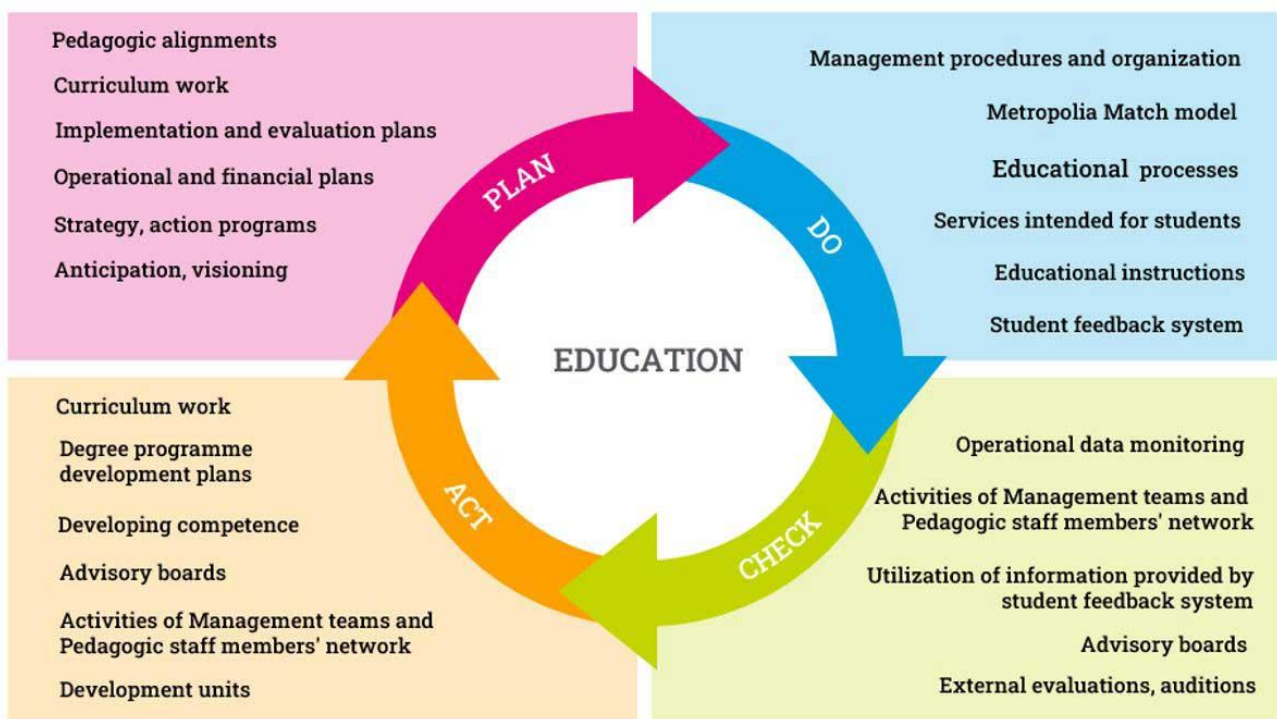


Figure 9 The management of education is interlinked to quality management.

Learning Development unit develops and coordinates internal shared processes of Education, and *Learning Networks and Services* focuses on Education services provided externally, such as the career services for immigrants. In addition, education development is supported by the pedagogic staff members' network for pedagogic development, consisting of school personnel, as well as the digital mentor network that supports the digitalization of education in particular (see 1.4). The systematic implementation of shared processes and operating policies throughout the area of lifelong learning has been identified as an area of enhancement.

Education processes the information provided by the feedback system. This concerns the

management team of Lifelong Learning, the management teams of the schools and/or degree-specific teams. The processed information is then applied to the development of degrees and to pedagogic decision-making. Indicators describing credit accumulation, study progress and graduation in degree programmes and lifelong learning are used to monitor the study programmes. The data is accessible in the reporting portal. Development work to assemble the data into one platform (QlikSense) is in progress. Monitoring of the indicators is the responsibility of the heads of schools and heads of degree programmes. The information is reviewed by the management teams of the schools and during personnel development days. Each head of degree programme is in charge of assessing their respective degree programmes and identifying development needs.

The schools perform an annual pedagogic assessment and prepare a development plan, supported by the schools' pedagogic staff members. The plan will be integrated in the degree-specific development plans in 2022. In addition, discussions on education development are conducted in the annual workshops for managers and heads of degree programmes. The workshops also include representatives of other units of the UAS, such as RDI, Academic Services and Business Activities. The development of the offering of non-degree-awarding education is coordinated in the Learning Networks and Services unit in cooperation with the schools. The monitoring and assessment of the offering by the open UAS is the duty of its steering group.

Students participate in the development of education by giving feedback and via their representatives in the [METKA](#) student union. The President meets them approximately once a month during semesters. The Director of Lifelong Learning meets METKA representatives and representatives of sector-specific student associations 3–4 times per year. METKA's representatives participate regularly in the feedback discussions in meetings of the Lifelong Learning management team. In addition, METKA develops peer mentoring and student activist operations in cooperation with the Student Well-being Services.

Needs of the business world are incorporated in the development of education through the activities of advisory boards, networks, and project activities as well as other RDI activities. Sector-specific alumni networks are strong. Information about the needs of the business world is obtained in connection with multidisciplinary innovation project studies, work placement, theses, as well as project activities and other RDI activities. The opinion of the business world is also heard by means of the RDI integration in innovation hubs and collaboration platforms (see 4). In addition, there is a forecast project under way at Metropolia. It models the future needs of the business world. Utilizing the needs of the business world and forecast data in the development of education systematically has been identified as an enhancement area.

Strengths

Recurring student feedback surveys (course feedback, AVOP, AVOP2, HowULearn, Career Monitoring Survey).

Open and frequent dialogue with the METKA student union and sector-specific associations.

Enhancement areas

Systematic use of student feedback in the development of teaching, and the provision of reciprocal feedback.

Systematic use of needs of the business world and forecasts as part of the development of education.

Services provided by Academic Services and Information Management Services are universally valued.

Adherence to common guidelines and agreed practices in all Lifelong Learning.

1.3 The evaluation and enhancement of education

- Assessment of the audit team

Feedback collection occurs systematically and regularly

As mentioned in the audit material, the HEI systematically collects data regularly along the student life cycle, primarily on a quantitative basis. These collections include, for instance, course feedback, graduates' feedback, the HowULearn questionnaire, and a career monitoring survey. Within these surveys, Metropolia addresses learning experiences from classes, experiences concerning the degree programme and satisfaction post-graduation. Metropolia considers response rates a significant challenge, which, unfortunately, has become a common phenomenon in other countries. As already mentioned, survey participation of international students could be enhanced through questionnaires in English.

According to the self-evaluation report, the development and enhancement of the feedback system has been identified as an important assignment for the quality group, which was installed in the autumn of 2022. The audit team acknowledges these efforts but would like to point out that the portfolio for possible feedback methods goes well beyond surveys. As a large institution, Metropolia might consider surveys an obvious first choice. However, it might be more effective to collect feedback on a qualitative basis as well, e.g. through reflexive tasks in class or focused on a certain amount of classes every year only. The audit team would like to encourage Metropolia to experiment with different methods of data collection, which might also make both processing data and applying data-based measures easier.

Students should be provided with feedback on their feedback more systematically

Students are represented in various committees and working groups, where any feedback collected is handled. In addition, METKA representatives regularly meet with the president and the director for lifelong learning. The audit team highlights the open dialogue between university leaders and students, which cannot be taken for granted in such a large and diverse organisation. However, direct feedback through the student representatives works as well. Student interviewees from METKA gave concrete examples of issues that could be solved and where the measures taken were communicated to the students concerned. However, the university acknowledges that there is still a need to improve the visibility of changes based on feedback.

Better visibility of concrete measures would strongly incentivise student participation in feedback. It would also include the teacher's feedback on class-level student feedback. The quality group has identified this issue, and the audit team wants to assure Metropolia to continue this discussion.

Metropolia monitors educational degree programmes in a systematic way

Data, which the HEI collects on various occasions, is discussed intensively on the degree programme and school level, as was mentioned during the interviews. There is also a close connection to the job market, represented in the various advisory boards. The School of ICT currently experiments with a document analysis of job offers by applying artificial intelligence methods to match the job market's needs with degree programmes. The audit team would like to highlight this innovative approach and encourages the school to communicate this good practice more thoroughly within the institution. As a result, the approach could be extended to other fields of study. As already mentioned, due to an extensive revision process of almost all specifications and guidelines and a readjustment of processes, many procedures are still considered new or have not yet been firmly established. The discussion of collected data with adjoining advisory boards would be an advantageous development of the monitoring process and enhance the advisory board's function.

The self-evaluation report and discussions during the audit visit underline the incorporation of feedback and the achievement of learning outcomes. Advisory boards, innovation hubs, other RDI activities and collaboration platforms provide first-hand information on how graduates perform in working life. This strong association provides Metropolia with all the information needed for school and degree programme levels. In addition, alumni keep in touch with the HEI and thus serve as role models for a successful transition to the job market as competent representatives of Metropolia's educational provision.

Degree programmes and other educational provisions offer endless possibilities for continuous learning, considering the various target groups and their unique needs at different stages during their studies. Students are provided with various subjects and teaching as well as assessment in compliance with the stage of their studies. Learning opportunities arise in the classrooms, within the innovation projects, abroad and during the thesis. Different learning methods and environments encourage the continuous acquisition of new competences.

Metropolia uses feedback and data for systematic education enhancement

Feedback and evaluation results are discussed on various levels within the institution: degree programmes, schools, units etc. The results are systematically used to improve and evolve educational provision. For instance, data from the recently installed HowULearn survey is handled in a joint workshop for students and staff, which is an important step to close the loop. The need for systematically establishing new procedures after revisions within the system and for visibility of improvements within Metropolia were already mentioned.

The university uses information from various surveys, e. g. the national graduate survey, but also direct feedback on performance to improve support services. The various units discuss these results on a team level, as was mentioned in the interviews during the visit. The audit team acknowledges these efforts and would simultaneously encourage discussion and the implementation of measures across service units to gain a more common understanding of the different units' tasks and obtain a common idea of service quality within the institution. The quality group could be a starting point for such an initiative.