3.3 Functionality and development of the quality system

- HEI's self-assessment

Targets of quality work in UTU include research, education, and societal interaction, and the services and functions supporting them

The UTU Quality Policy steers the development of quality work by defining the main principles of quality work. The Quality manual describes the UTU Quality System and the principles for its development. The quality documentation is prepared in collaboration with the UTU community.

The Quality System of UTU is based on the academic operational culture and it supports the realisation of the basic missions by steering, support services and quality management.
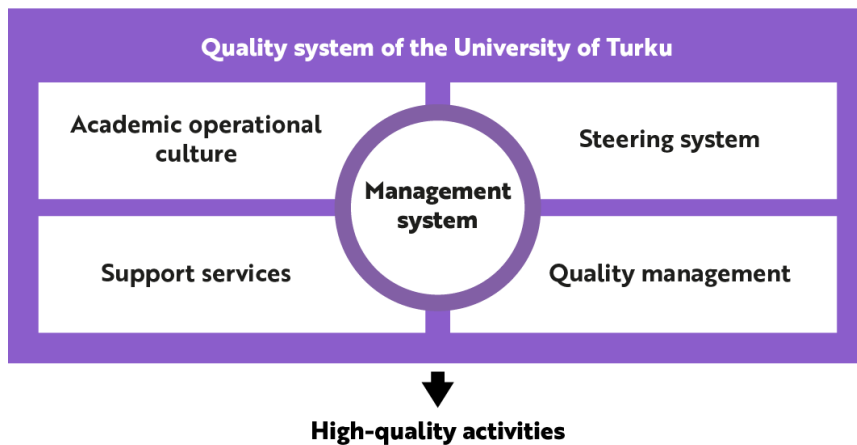
Figure 24. The quality system of UTU

The entire UTU community participates in the continuous development of high-quality operations as part of their work. Structurally, quality work follows the [organisational structure](#) that consists of faculties, independent units and support services. Figure 25 presents the key operational roles of quality work in UTU.
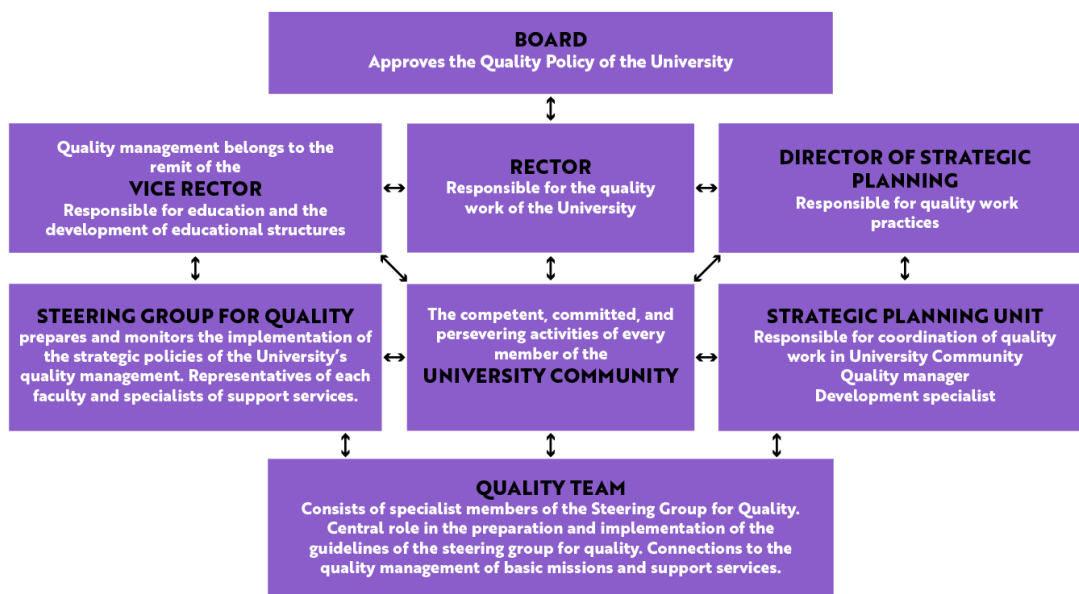
Roles in quality work

Figure 25. Key operational roles in UTU quality work

As part of the steering, annual planning is used to monitor the basic missions in faculties and independent units. The process is connected to the monitoring of the [Strategy](#) and its Policy Programme. The annual target negotiations with the UTU management give feedback and guidelines to the development activities.

Various feedback systems, functional and up-to-date instructions, and well-functioning good practices support the basic missions. Quality assurance is implemented with assessments,

accreditations, certificates and [rankings](#), and methods of risk management and internal control. Unit- or function-specific quality systems are utilised, for example, in laboratory work.

UTU support services require a well-functioning feedback system which includes the opportunity to give feedback, methods of documenting and handling feedback, and communications practices. UTU's goal is transparency and interaction in giving and handling feedback.

University-level instructions are available on the intranet for the community members. Instructions are constantly monitored and updated according to the needs of UTU and the surrounding society.

Special focus has been put on good practices among the entire UTU community. The Strategic Planning unit and the University´s Human Resources collaborate with the UTU community to promote good practices. Information on good practices is collected, shared, discussed, and developed continuously on an internal forum which is accessible to the entire community. Concise information on good practices is published on the intranet to keep the community up to date on the latest development. In addition to good practices used on the University level, there are good practices in and between certain task areas or units.

The multidisciplinary [mentoring programme](#) is an example of a good practice which has been disseminated throughout the University. The programme supports students' transition into working life as well as the professional development and career planning of researchers and other staff.

Students, staff and stakeholders have active roles in developing UTU

The values defined in the UTU's Strategy include openness and communality. A culture supporting quality and new initiatives is built in collaboration with the UTU community. The community members and external stakeholders can make initiatives, participate in developing the University in different ways, and give feedback on the operations. The role of international staff and students is supported as described in UTU'S International Programme.

The personnel make an impact on the University's activities, its results, and work community in several ways through their work, expertise, and methods. In addition to carrying out work duties, participating in the operations of working groups on different organisational levels, the [UTU Board, and the UTU Collegiate Council](#) is an important channel of influence. The Strategy and the annual planning, monitoring and reporting practices enable regular feedback and initiatives.

Students contribute actively to the development of teaching and learning. Key opportunities to influence the operations include the student feedback systems. Students are members of the UTU's decision-making and administrative bodies and preparatory groups on different organisational levels, including the UTU Board and the UTU Collegiate Council. By communicating and collaborating, the University and the [Student Union (TYY)](#) ensure that the roles of both UTU and TYY regarding the University's educational mission are fulfilled.

Doctoral researchers participate actively in the development and decision-making of the doctoral programmes and UTU Graduate School. Regular feedback surveys are available for doctoral researchers as a part of their doctoral training (Figure 6).

The external stakeholders can influence the University's operations as members of the UTU Board, councils or advisory boards, and in different working groups. Co-operation with the UTU stakeholders supports the development of the basic missions, and strengthens the University's impact. Stakeholders can also participate in teaching and guidance and provide professional life connections. A key channel for stakeholder co-operation is the [alumni activities](), which is developed with an operational plan.

Operational plan for quality management is connected to everyday activities in basic missions, steering, and development

The steering Group for Quality Work prepares and monitors the implementation of the strategic policies of UTU's quality management. The duties of the Group include the coordination, maintenance, development, documentation and evaluation of the quality system. The Quality Team has an essential role in the preparation and implementation of the guidelines of the Group.

The Group steers and approves the operational plan for quality management, two of which are drawn up during the audit period. A central focus in the operational plan is to connect quality work to everyday activities in the basic missions, steering, and development. The Group constantly monitors the development of quality work and assesses the operational plan at the end of the planning cycle. The Rector decides on further actions required by the assessments.

Strengths	Enhancement areas
Organisational culture supporting new initiatives and quality as a part of everyday activities	Utilisation of foresight information on quality management
The quality manual is a practical and easily understandable document listing basic procedures in one place, in a transparent manner	Understanding everyday activities as part of the quality system and quality work concepts of UTU
Students are members of the University's decision-making and administrative bodies and preparatory groups on different organisational levels, including the University Board and the University Collegiate Council	Developing the visibility of collected feedback and its utilisation (especially from stakeholders) both internally and externally
Doctoral researchers are members of the UTUGS and other research related decision making and administrative bodies	Developing easy access to University-level instructions side by side with the Asta information system

3.3 Functionality and development of the quality

system

- Assessment of the audit team

UTU has a functioning quality system that covers its core duties

The University's quality system is based on a strategy-oriented approach, in which the management system, steering system, quality management, support services, and academic and operational culture are interwoven. The quality system comprises a participatory strategy process, annual planning processes, strategy implementation monitoring, internal and external evaluations and feedback information.

UTU's quality system is functioning and covers the University's core duties and services. The interviews indicated that significant progress had been made in recent years in structuring and visualising the quality system. As a result of this work, the University of Turku's Quality Manual defines the objectives, responsibilities, and practices of the quality system for the University's core functions and services. The audit team attaches particular importance to the message that emerged from the interviews: quality work has become more embedded in the everyday life of the units. In contrast, the unit-specific quality system descriptions in the intranet vary widely. Some faculties and units clearly describe their strategic foci and procedures for collecting and handling feedback, while others lack this information on their website.

There is evidence of the impact of the quality system (PDCA) in education and research. The societal engagement and impact, its activities and quality management have been a focus of UTU's development since the last FINEEC audit. It is also partly reflected in the optional theme of this audit of the University of Turku: Support services for societal impact. The audit team recommends that the evaluation and monitoring of societal engagement and impact on the quality system be implemented throughout the University.

While the information produced by the quality system is clearly used for development work, the Act phase of the PDCA cycle needs to be made more visible to members of the university community and stakeholders. The audit team agrees with the University's self-assessment report that it should invest more in developing the visibility of collected feedback and its utilisation.

An open-quality culture enables broad participation

At UTU, the quality of operations and strategy implementation are monitored and developed in an open and participatory manner at different levels of the organisation. Staff and undergraduate students participate in developing activities in the organisation's different institutions and working groups appropriately. One example of an inclusive and open-quality culture is regular meetings and direct interaction of student representatives with the Rectorate and deans.

The external stakeholders can influence the University's operations as members of the UTU Board, councils, advisory boards, and in different working groups. The Board decides on new degree programmes, so stakeholders' views are fed into the programmes' evaluation through this process. The audit team recommends including students in continuous learning as development partners in developing and monitoring courses. Similarly, the University should continue to better integrate international students, continuous learning students and doctoral researchers into the UTU community.

The University of Turku's steering group for quality work monitors and develops the quality system. The coherence of the quality system is ensured by common processes and guidelines at the university level. Although the quality system has been in place for more than ten years, UTU must continue to pay attention to implementing the quality system in everyday life and communicate to the University community that quality work is essentially the development of one's own work.

Based on the audit visit, there is a wealth of good practice in different faculties and units in areas such as curriculum work, student feedback and cooperation with external stakeholders. While the different councils are working to disseminate good practices, there is scope for making good practices and their sharing more visible. UTU could also achieve further synergies within the University and further cooperation with other universities.