

AUDIT OF THE LAPPEENRANTA-LAHTI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY LUT

Authors **Håkan Wiklund, Irina Duma, Birgit Kraus, Matti Kuronen & Mirella Nordblad. Annikka Nurkka (ed.) Self-assessment of LUT.**

Year of publication **2021**, FINEEC publications **16:2021**

Language **English**

ISBN **978-952-206-704-3 pdf**

3.2 Supporting the competence development and well-being of the staff

- HEI's self-assessment

Competence development based on the strategy

LUT's strategy and action plans steer the professional development of staff. The goal is to keep improving the work atmosphere and well-being of the staff and to highlight the importance and competence of every staff member as part of the whole.

A [four-level tenure track](#) is applied to academic positions at LUT. Researchers and teachers are employed either in a tenure track position or a non-tenure track position. Both systems have fixed targets and criteria for advancement from one level to the next. Thus, the academic staff knows in advance the priorities of their professional development. The tenure track committee ensures the uniformity of this system.

Annual development discussions are an important means to identify and record development needs of staff competence. When organising in-house training, feedback is collected and people can express their wishes for future trainings. Teachers receive ideas for their professional development in regular course feedback surveys. LUT staff also has the possibility to express their development wishes in many feedback surveys.

Heads of units and supervisors best know the expertise available in their unit and the need to

develop it. They assess the professional expertise of their team and see to its development together with the employees themselves.

Training for different staff groups

Based on the strategic emphasis and expressed needs, LUT annually compiles a personnel and training plan. Researchers develop their scientific competence by joining various networks and building connections in international scientific conferences. As teaching increasingly takes place online, LUT has invested in pedagogical and technical skills and support for the teaching staff. Teaching staff can also develop their pedagogical skills in LUT's university pedagogy training. Supervisors are regularly offered an opportunity to take part in coaching groups led by an expert. The skills of managers will be enhanced by providing needs-based training.

Language courses, IT courses, occupational safety training and first aid training are available for all employees, and the whole training plan is available on the intranet. Furthermore, each unit may enable its employees to take part in training outside the university. LUT supports the professional development of its personnel by allowing them to take two lessons per week for independent study or a longer study leave.

Open, transparent and merit-based recruitment

LUT applies an open and international application process in recruiting personnel for teaching and research positions to reach a wide range of competent applicants. Recruitment channels are tailored to the position and selected by the recruiting unit. The open international application process is applied to all tenure track positions, but direct recruitment is sometimes used to ensure the hiring of the best talents. According to LUT's strategic action plan, the gender balance is one criterion to be considered in academic recruitments. Selection is always based on the merits, competence and skills of candidates. To secure a transparent and justified selection, external academic experts evaluate top candidates to tenure track positions, in addition to the evaluation done by an internal selection committee.

Staff's well-being contributes to the achievement of university targets

One of the basic factors of well-being at work is flexible working time arrangements for all LUT staff members. LUT promotes family-friendliness by taking into account the different life situations of employees and, for example, enabling part-time work. LUT has a positive attitude towards remote work. Based on the experiences during the covid-19 pandemic, LUT offers diverse support for remote employees (e.g. technical support and virtual workouts) and for maintaining a sense of community in telework.

To support coping at work, the university offers its employees recreational Happiness through Health activities on both campuses. Occupational safety groups ensure a functional and safe

work environment for all. LUT provides its employees with modern and diverse occupational health care services. Early support for the capacity to work promotes workplace well-being, identifies possible threats to working capacity and enables timely interventions.

LUT conducts a workplace well-being survey every other year, and a monthly employee mood tracker monitors employee well-being more frequently. Their results are used to improve the working conditions and well-being of employees.

At home on all campuses

LUT's strategic goal is to treat all members of the university community equally. The UN Declaration of Human Rights is the foundation for operation on the campuses. Everyone working and studying on our campuses must respect it in their daily lives. The equality of LUT community members is supported by a regularly updated equality plans for [personnel](#) and [students](#).

Open communication is one factor in enhancing equality. On the LUT intranet, all staff members can ask or comment on matters in the LUT Stream. As LUT's scientific community becomes more and more international, the wider parallel use of English in internal communication is encouraged. LUT staff is encouraged to participate in the development of the university through e.g. surveys and open feedback channels.

Strengths

Strategic commitment to the development of staff well-being

Diverse Happiness through Health activities

Flexible implementation of and support for remote work

Enhancement areas

Shared operating models on both campuses

Closer follow-up of development discussions

Support for the integration of foreign employees and their families

3.2 Supporting the competence development and well-being of the staff

- Assessment of the audit team

LUT has functioning routines for identifying the competence development

needs among staff

The audit team notes that recruitment and competence development are strategic issues for the university. LUT has a recruitment policy together with LAB University of Applied Sciences that regulates the starting points and processes for the recruitment of staff. The ambition is that the recruitment work is open, transparent and based on merit. The policy is also available on the university's website. Furthermore, the university encourages the majority of positions to be advertised internationally, which is applied to all tenure track positions. This is commendable and in line with the university's ambitions to strengthen internationalisation. The strategic action plan requires that gender balance should be promoted in connection with academic recruitments. In summary, the audit team notes that the procedures for staff recruitment are clear, accessible and transparent.

The university's tenure track system includes competence development with clear targets for teachers and researchers. The target of the tenure track positions is to advance to the level of full professor based on post-doctoral achievements and qualifications. Non-tenure track positions are either research- or teaching-oriented, based on the needs of the school. The tenure track committee ensures that the system is applied and that related procedures are uniform in quality and content. The audit team's impression is that the tenure track system works well and is appreciated within the university.

Based on the interviews and available documentation, the university has functioning routines for identifying development needs for staff competence and for supporting the development of staff competence. This applies to all staff at the university. Here, the audit team would like to specifically mention that teachers are actively encouraged to obtain pedagogical training of at least 25 credits or even take the vocational teacher training degree. The annual development discussions are applied so that they achieve the purpose of identifying and recording development needs of staff competence. Competence development within successful academic leadership will become increasingly important in the coming years. This is a challenge that is shared by many universities, and the university is aware of it.

There is a systematic approach in supporting staff well-being at work

The interviews confirmed the impression that the university has a clear focus on the well-being of staff, both in terms of follow-ups and through activities such as 'Happiness through Health activities'. The university's ambitions regarding well-being are exposed in various ways within the university. The well-being issues have a prominent position in the university's quality work, for example, through a workplace well-being survey every other year and the anonymous and monthly measurements through the 'employee mood tracker' the results of which are available on the university intranet. The overall impression of the audit team is that the follow-up routines regarding well-being mainly work well. At the same time, the mood tracker system generates relatively blunt information that makes in-depth investigations necessary to find out the reasons

for any changes.

According to the LUT Quality Manual, the rector is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all members of the university community are treated equally and in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The LUT Group Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan gives the impression of proactive and systematic work that is accompanied by a division of responsibilities and follow-up activities. The interviews during the audit visit confirmed the positive impression.