

AUDIT OF HäME UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Authors **Eva Werner, Mia Brzakovic, Henrik Dindas, Kaisa Lähteenmäki-Smith, Marja-Liisa Saarilampi & Karl Holm. Self-assessment of Häme University of Applied Sciences (ed.) Lotta Linko**

Year of publication **2022**, FINEEC publications **17:2022**

Language **English**

ISBN **978-952-206-682-4 pdf**

3.3 Functionality and development of the quality system

- HEI's self-assessment

HAMK's **quality system** forms a cycle of management, planning, and implementation, as well as monitoring and development (PDCA). It ensures that the activities are in line with the objectives and that the activities are continuously evaluated and developed. The quality system covers HAMK's basic tasks and support functions and is closely linked to management and resource planning. This strengthens the functionality and coverage of the system. Labour market, students, and staff participate in the development of HAMK's activities through the feedback system and evaluations. The students are represented in the HAMK Board, the Management Board, the Quality Management Development Group, and other development groups.

HAMK's strength is the **long history** of the quality system and quality culture. Quality concerns all at HAMK. **Students**, as an integral part of the HAMK community, participate in quality development as part of the procedures in their studies. Each HAMK **employee** participates in developing and maintaining quality in their own work by working towards the objectives, following agreed practices, utilising BI data and feedback, and on the principle of continuous improvement.

HAMK's **operating culture** supports and promotes the sharing of good practices, shared learning, and co-creating. The sharing of good practices takes place through cooperation, management, and the activities of development groups (e.g. LeaD Team, Language and Communications Team, Guidance Counsellor Group, RDI Support Team). The groups work together to learn and develop, and group members share their knowledge with their own units

and stakeholders. Shared learning and sharing of competence are supported in everyday management work, as well as through work community communications and digital platforms.

Development projects are a means of increasing and sharing competence. The joint, annual **Personnel Days event** focuses on the selected strategic theme. **HAMK 100** programme supports the sharing of good practices.

An example of more extensive implementation of good practices is the development of the quality of module implementation, with the concept of Design Quality for Module Implementation and the support of the LeaD team, which began with the development of online teaching and has expanded to cover all education implemented as modules.

Quality system procedures guide and produce information

The **instruction system** ensures comprehensive smoothness and consistency of the work. The guidance, validity, and coverage of the instructions vary appropriately. The instruction system supports management, supervisory and operational work. The persons responsible for the various functions maintain instructions in their area of responsibility.

Information is collected on the state of operations. Information is generated on the implementation and quality of HAMK's basic tasks, the implementation of the strategy, and the funding indicators set by the MoEC. The knowledge base is utilised to support management and resource planning.

Peer **reviews**, external **evaluations**, and **self-assessments** enable shared learning and development. **Feedback** procedures help identifying development areas in a targeted manner. The feedback system is extensive and analysing feedback data is a part of basic activities. The amount of feedback data in terms of quantity and time span is rich. As the amount of data is abundant, HAMK selects and utilises the data relevant to be analysed in deep. The feedback system identifies the needs for delimitation and clarification.

Quality system is developing

Staff is committed to quality work. Quality management mechanisms function well, and the system is constantly being developed. The foundation and key procedures of the quality system have remained for decades, but the description and operations are **adapted** to the needs of the constantly changing operational environment dynamically and in communication with stakeholders.

The quality system has been developed on the basis of **feedback** received from FINEEC audits, other external evaluations and information produced by quality work related to management and resource planning. Quality system has been digitalised in relevant procedures and processes. The description of quality management has been clarified on the new intranet. Internal communication related to quality has been increased. The goal-oriented approach has been

strengthened by the reform of the MBO's information system. Operating instructions have been streamlined by lightening the guidance system and reducing the number of individual instructions. The new intranet serves as a staff interface for the instructions, and its implementation is partly under way.

The importance of quality management has been emphasised through resourcing: HAMK has a full-time Quality Manager, and a Team of Quality Contact Persons from each unit has been established to support the quality work of the units. The activities of the Quality Management Development Group have been sharpened.

In 2019, the inclusiveness of stakeholders was strengthened, based on the results of the labour market audits of research units and modules. The evaluation results were one factor leading to HAMK board discussing with stakeholders more regularly than earlier. Strategic communications on research units have been strengthened, and customer and partnership management and feedback surveys have been developed (CRM system reform, utility indicator). The integration of campuses into their local community is promoted through joint experiments (e.g. Riihimäki Robotics).

Strengths

The long history of quality management and the formed committed quality culture

Willingness and the ability to develop the system and operations into the digital era

Management commitment, functional organisation of QA and resource allocation

Enhancement areas

Need to further increase explicit quality dialogue

The feedback system produces data in such quantities that it cannot be utilised in all respect

Balancing the impact of feedback from stakeholders in the complex operating environment

3.3 Functionality and development of the quality system

- Assessment of the audit team

A solid and comprehensive quality management system frames HAMK's core processes

HAMK's quality system is based on the principle of continuous improvement of all its core areas, strong stakeholder involvement and an actively supported quality dialogue as main drivers for improvement and development. Stakeholder involvement and quality dialogues are key in enhancing the quality of education, research and innovation to foster competence development

and HAMK's societal impact and engagement. Close linkage to strategic management and planning, regular monitoring and reviews of quality cycles and core processes, integration of various forms of feedback and shared responsibility for quality development clearly shape HAMK's quality management system. The interviews with representatives of various units, including different support services, provided evidence that a common understanding of quality, and each individual's contribution to it, is well grounded in the institution.

Strategic management, which is built on the pillars of management by objectives, competence and knowledge management is diligently supported by HAMK's BI system and fosters goal orientation and further development. Examples of quality dialogue as mentioned in the interviews are teamwork, common data interpretation, as well as various forms of feedback, and a regular integration of quality issues in meetings and personal contacts. The staff also referred to the process for co-creation of modules and the sharing of good practices across departments as examples of quality dialogue, which create an immediate impact on the quality of education and stimulate innovation in teaching, learning and research. All forms of quality dialogue also help recognising development needs both on an institutional and individual level and foster participation in quality management.

HAMK's quality management as a breeding ground for quality culture and enhancement

Continuous improvement ensured by a smooth and well-guided *pdca cycle*, participation of internal and external stakeholders in quality work and feedback, shared learning and co-creation all foster and nourish HAMK's quality culture and a widely shared quality-oriented mindset. Quality management and its tools are steadily further developed, with the digitalisation of the institutional quality management system through the STARA 2.0 system serving as a recent example of good practice. HAMK's readiness to innovate and to improve through the implementation of digital tools, its educational research, as well as its network of academic and business partners, essentially contribute to the institutional quality culture but also to the impact on its core processes of education and RDI. In the interviews it was clearly stated that the use of educational research results in the ability to better monitor students' learning experience; furthermore, HAMK's participation in and its input to the RUN EU alliance were mentioned as examples for evidence and purposeful enhancement activities. As HAMK has a leading role in regional societal development, outcomes stemming from the EU RUN alliance should be evaluated regarding impact and enhancement opportunities for regional development.

In all interviews, the functionality, the steady further development, the purposeful use, and the positive impact of HAMK's quality management and quality management system were confirmed. The audit team also gained convincing evidence that, at HAMK, quality is considered a shared and common responsibility, which builds on inclusion and participation of all internal and external stakeholders, on transparent information, purposeful processes and tools, and a diligently monitored quality culture throughout the institution. HAMK's quality culture and the steady and

long-term further development of its quality management are considerably conceived by a bold attitude, a clear strategy with ambitious goals and "the HAMK community" as was mentioned as an overall strength in the interviews.