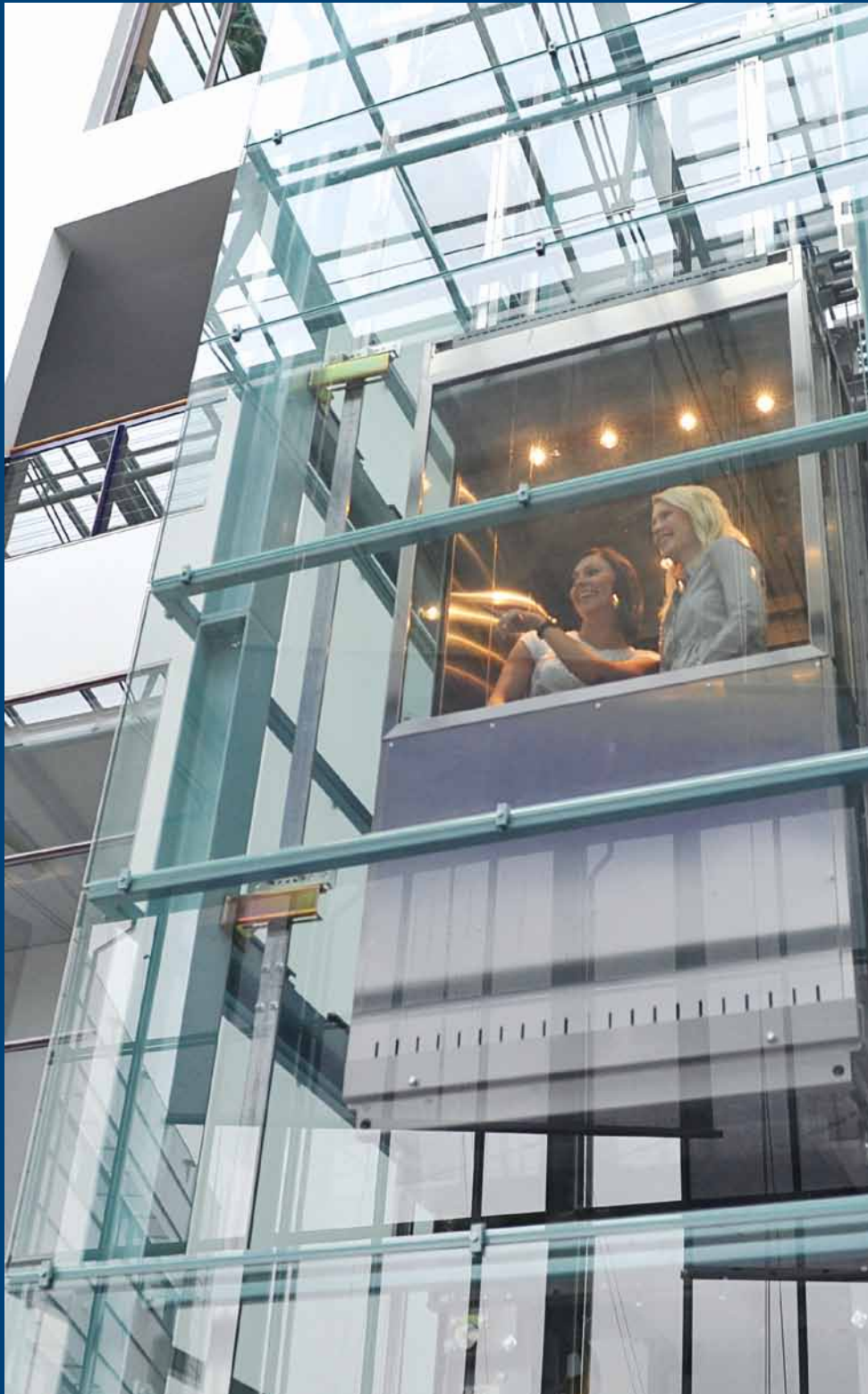




LAUREA



Laurea's Quality Assurance Handbook 2009

Laurea – Prime Mover

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1 Introduction

Quality assurance is part of the continuous development of Laurea's operations and is linked to all Laurea's operations as different monitoring and development measures. Therefore, it is part of the management, strategic work and internal result-oriented management of the organisation. All people working and studying at Laurea and the most important stakeholders participate in quality improvement.

The aim of the Quality Assurance Handbook is to serve as a tool for the assessment of and familiarisation with Laurea's quality assurance activities and to highlight the roles, importance and tasks of different actors in the improvement of the quality of Laurea's operations. The Quality Assurance Handbook serves as a tool together with Laurea's quality assurance web pages on Internet and Intranet. The web pages give visibility to the continuous improvement of operational quality at Laurea and in the local units.

Laurea's Quality Assurance Handbook describes the different sectors of the quality assurance system. Continuous development serves as the basis for Laurea's quality assurance system and for the quality assurance activities according to it. The Quality Assurance Handbook describes, in accordance with the quality assurance system, Laurea's operating environment, the basis for operational planning (**Plan**), the operations (**Do**), the monitoring and assessment targets (**Check**) as well as the methods, procedures and tools used to develop the operations (**Act**).

2 Operating environment

Laurea operates in the Greater Helsinki area. A cluster of important higher education institutions, research institutes, innovative companies and national innovation system actors operates in the region. After all, the area is recognised as one of the world's most competitive innovation environments (Eurostat, IMF World Economic Outlook and European Innovation Scoreboard). The Greater Helsinki area produces about half of the country's gross domestic product. The area competes and cooperates with the other 78 metropolitan areas around the world recognised by the OECD.

2.1 Development of regional know-how

In accordance with the national innovation strategy and the metropolitan policy, higher education institutions have a central role in the creation of know-how and competitiveness. Laurea's international research and development work strengthens both Laurea's and regional know-how. A more far-reaching objective of the research and development work (R&D work) is to create the conditions for international competitiveness and balanced social development in both the area and the country. In its research and development work, Laurea emphasises bidirectionality in the transfer of international know-how. Laurea cooperates with the higher education institutions of the Greater Helsinki area, which strengthens regional R&D cooperation and partnerships. The most important objectives of the cooperation are to create and disseminate new know-how and to develop the cooperation network.

Laurea bases its labour relations on permanent structures instead of disjointed projects. Learning by Developing (LbD) is implemented through links to the labour market, which strengthens the permanent structure of development. In this way, new know-how is produced and systematically transferred in order to strengthen both Laurea's and the regional innovation system. Laurea's research and development environments are concrete development structures. An R&D environment is a physical, mental and/or virtual space that enables the implementation of R&D activities. Thanks to these environments, new know-how can be transferred to the learner, organisation, region and partners both nationally and internationally. In the R&D environments, high-quality and multidisciplinary projects are created and developed in interaction with other operating environments. Figure 1 shows Laurea's stakeholder classification.

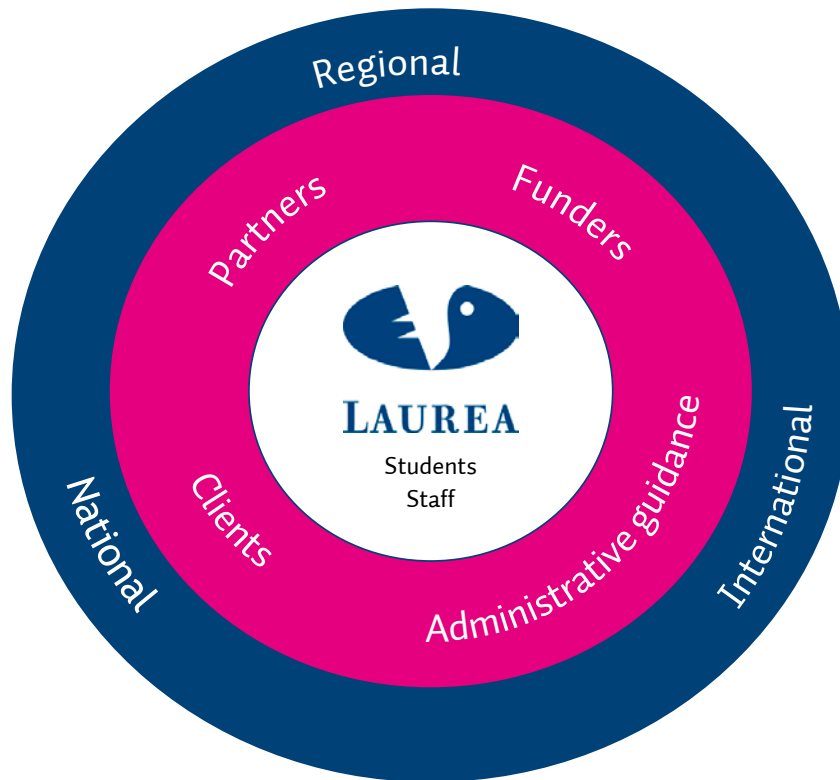


Figure 1. Laurea's stakeholder classification

2.2 Laurea in the cooperation networks

The international competitive position of the Greater Helsinki area is strengthened by means of a partnership agreement between four universities of applied sciences (HAMK University of Applied Sciences, Lahti University of Applied Sciences, Laurea University of Applied Sciences and Metropolia University of Applied Sciences) and the 2010-2012 action plan that implements it. The plan tightens the cooperation between the higher education institutions and clarifies the distribution of work.

The action plan is based on a commonly-agreed strategic intent and on the objectives set. It deals with the contractual cooperation between the universities of applied sciences as well as with operation profiling and work distribution. Furthermore, it enables a step-by-step approach to cooperating with the

other higher education institutions of the metropolitan area. The action plan proposal will be prepared in cooperation with the presidents. The proposal will be examined and a decision will be made in accordance with the normal decision-making order of each party.

The strategic intent for the year 2020 is an internationally recognised alliance of independent higher education institutions that strengthens the international competitive position of the Greater Helsinki area and provides, in its field, all the higher education, research and regional development services required by the business sector and the population at the highest level in the country.

The objective of the partnership agreement between the University of Technology and the City of Espoo is to promote together education and research as well as innovation and development in accordance with the strategies of the contracting parties. The objective is also to strengthen the partnership role of the contracting parties in the implementation of the competitive strategy of the metropolitan area and, through this, to promote Otaniemi's development as a world-class innovation environment.

The Helsinki Metropolitan Innovation Platform (HMIP) action line of the Helsinki Education and Research Area (HERA) concentrates the innovation services of the higher education institutions of the region in a common network. The HMIP network enables the specialisation of innovation services according to strength areas, the mutual production and purchase of services, real-time information services, integrated education and training as well as the marketing of common interests and know-how.

The strategic partnership agreements with the public and private actors of the area increase the regional effectiveness of Laurea's R&D work. A long-term cooperation agreement has been signed with the City of Vantaa for the development of a cosy, functional and safe urban environment that promotes community. The area of focus of the cooperation is the implementation of resident-oriented research and development projects.

2.3 Know-how clusters

Strategic top-level expertise clusters (STLEC) and the centre of expertise programme (CEP) are some of the most important tools for know-how concentration. Strategic top-level expertise clusters are a new way to aggregate scattered research resources into important targets from the point of view of companies and society. The clusters require long-term strategic commitment from their owners. The operations are funded by companies, research organisations and public funders.

The first STLECs to start operations were Metsäklusteri Oy, TIVIT Oy, FIMECC Oy and Cleen Oy. The next ones on the list are the Built Environment cluster and the Health and Welfare cluster. Laurea is a shareholder of TIVIT Oy and FIMECC Oy.

The operating model of the centre of expertise programme was renewed for the period 2007-2013 and made cluster-based. One of its objectives is to sharpen specialisation between areas and strengthen cooperation between expertise centres.

3 Quality assurance

Quality assurance consists of procedures, processes and systems used to guarantee and improve the quality of Laurea's operations. Quality assurance is carried out using jointly-defined, operation-enhancing and appropriate procedures, methods and tools.

The aim of Laurea's quality assurance work is to obtain, maintain and further develop Laurea's quality culture. Laurea's quality culture is attained by working together and setting a common objective. The maintenance and development of quality culture require the systematic exploitation of feedback, evaluation and monitoring data as well as the assessment of the effectiveness of the exploitation.

Laurea monitors and improves quality using a quality assurance system. Laurea's quality assurance system is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Laurea's quality assurance system

Continuous development serves as the basis for Laurea's quality assurance system and the quality assurance activities according to it. Continuous development consists of four phases (**Plan – Do – Check – Act**). At Laurea, it is implemented as follows:

Plan is the basis of operational planning. **Do** contains a project description and operations according to it. **Check** means operation monitoring and evaluation by means of defined indicators. **Act** is the implementation and documentation of development measures selected by means of monitoring, evaluation

and feedback data as well as the monitoring of the effectiveness of the development measures. Continuous development can be seen as a spiral or an endless process. Its different stages do not always linearly follow each other. Instead, for example, the evaluation data can directly affect the further planning of the operations. Continuous development is implemented at Laurea as well as in the local and regional units.

The aim of Laurea's quality assurance system is to

- support the achievement of the strategic intent and the implementation of the strategies
- extensively guarantee the quality of higher education and of other activities
- systematically produce quality-related data for the development of the operations
- promote recognition of insufficient quality
- standardise the operations and make them more effective
- strengthen quality culture development.

4 Basis of operational planning

The planning of Laurea's operations is guided by Laurea's values and strategic intent as well as by the Pedagogical Strategy, the Research and Development Strategy and the Regional Development Strategy derived from them. The operational objective is a strategic intent that defines Laurea's position in the future. The strategic intent will be achieved with the help of the strategies. Critical success factors and targets have been identified in order to achieve the strategic objectives. These factors and targets will be specified in the Strategy Implementation Plan. The values, strategic intent and strategies will be defined as part of Laurea's Strategy and Management process. Planning of the quality of Laurea's operations is based on network of quality assurance actors in which each people working and studying at Laurea and the stakeholders have roles and functions.

4.1 Values

Laurea's values direct all choices. Laurea's values are student and customer focus, reliability, communality, openness and working together, social responsibility and innovativeness. Laurea's values are shown in Figure 3 below.

During the reform of Laurea's strategy 2010–2015, communality, social responsibility and creativity were summarised as guiding principles for the operations. The selection was carried out on the basis of the former values. The people working and studying at Laurea and the stakeholders participated in the discussion on the values by bringing forth their personal views on the new values and their importance. The final decision concerning the new values will be made in connection with the approval of Laurea's strategy 2010–2015.

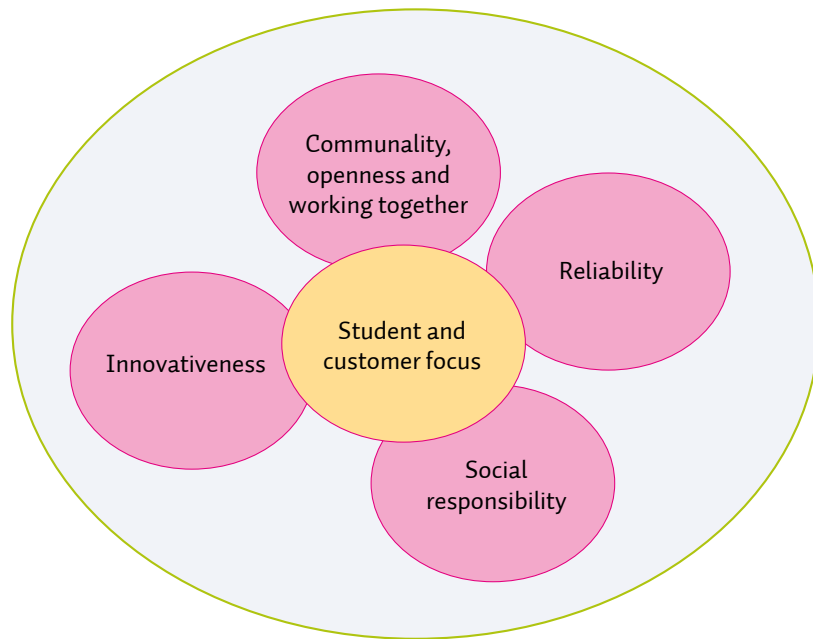


Figure 3. Laurea's values

Student and customer focus

In the communal processes of the LbD operating model, knowledge and new know-how are produced together with students, labour market representatives and other stakeholder representatives.

Reliability

Reliability means that Laurea is a reliable university of applied sciences. The know-how objectives specified in Laurea's curriculum are promises to the students and their achievement is assessed and developed by means of student feedback. Reliability also means impartial and fair cooperation.

Social responsibility

Social responsibility is related to Laurea as a higher education institution. Social cohesion is maintained through socially responsible activities. The educational process supports the development of the students' social responsibility for future expert work.

Innovativeness

For all those who work and study at Laurea, innovativeness as a value means open-mindedness and reciprocity with respect to new initiatives and ideas. Ability and desire for renewal are fundamental for the operations. Innovativeness as a value can also be seen in the know-how objectives of the curriculum.

Communality, openness and working together

High-quality learning according to the Learning by Developing (LbD) operating model requires communality, openness and working together. Openness and sensitivity to innovative operations become more important when fast changes occur in the operating environment. Laurea values openness in both internal and external communications.

4.2 Strategic intent

Laurea's strategic intent is based on Laurea's position and duties in its national and international operating environments. Laurea's strategic intent, which is to be, in 2010, a fully authorised and international university of applied sciences that participates in innovation activities, is the basis and starting point for Laurea's quality assurance activities. Laurea will achieve its strategic intent with the help of the Regional Development Strategy, the Research and Development Strategy and the Pedagogical Strategy.

Laurea's strategic intent is evaluated and renewed every five years or so. In the renewal process, Laurea's staff and steering group and the Board of the maintaining organisation analyse and forecast the changes taking place in the operating environment and define Laurea's position in the changing environment.

The international recognition of Laurea as a future university of applied sciences that specialises in know-how and metropolitan development has been set as the strategic intent for 2015. The strategic intent for 2015 is based upon the strategic intent for 2010 and shows the direction in which to develop future operations. Figure 4 shows Laurea's strategic intents for 2010 and 2015.

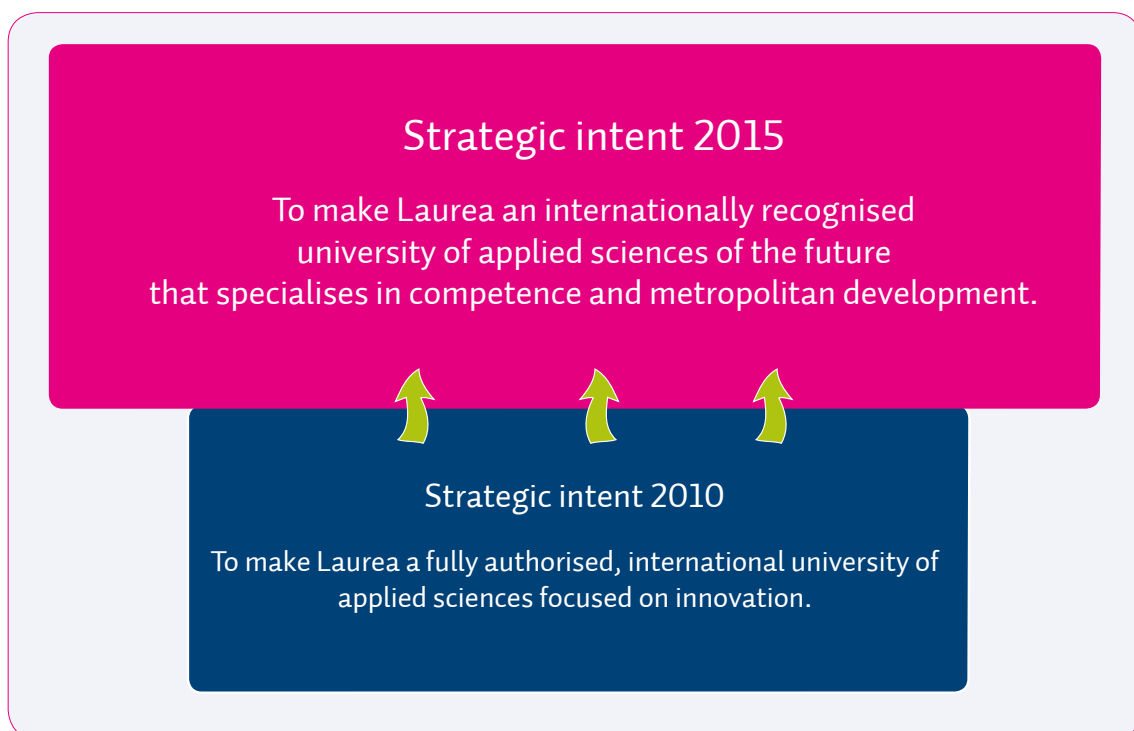


Figure 4. Laurea's strategic intents 2010 and 2015

4.3 Strategies

Three main strategies implement Laurea's strategic intent and set the objectives for the operations. These strategies are: Pedagogical Strategy, Research and Development (R&D) Strategy and Regional Development Strategy.

Pedagogical Strategy

Laurea's strategic choice is to integrate its three main tasks – education, research and development, and regional development. This refers to a solid connection between the three tasks such that all students, lecturers and other staff members can participate in all three at the same time. Laurea has created the Learning by Developing (LbD) operating model as a tool for achieving its strategic intent and implementing its strategies in practice. The Pedagogical Strategy describes the principles of this operating model and its view of learning, guidance, teaching, know-how assessment and learning environment development. The dimensions of the Learning by Developing operating model are shown in Figure 5.

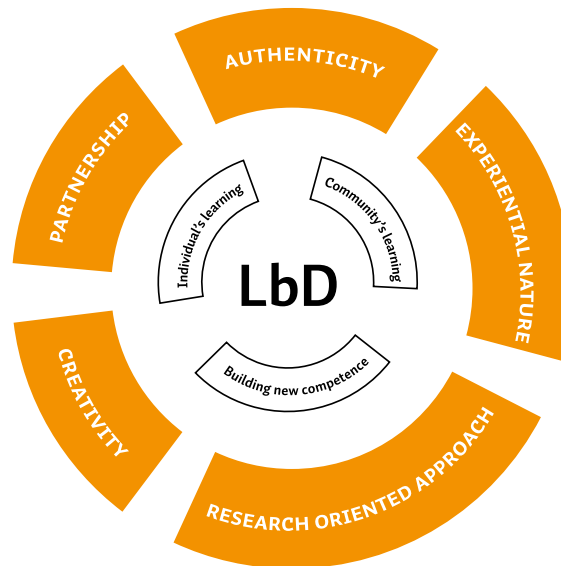


Figure 5. Dimensions of the Learning by Developing (LbD) operating model

Research and Development Strategy

Research and development activities based on working life and on the requirements for its development mean interaction between learning and working life. The aim of Laurea's R&D activities is to support the development of metropolisation, strengthen cluster development, conduct effective innovation activities and strengthen the international transfer of know-how.

Laurea's R&D work is increasingly directed towards international cooperation. The challenge is to identify and integrate into Laurea the strategically dynamic innovation environments that support Laurea's and regional strategic choices. In order to achieve the objective, Laurea's R&D work is profiled per area of focus in such a way that it takes into account the know-how potentials of the Greater Helsinki area

as well as the innovation and R&D strategies of the region. Creating and disseminating know-how and developing the cooperation network are important objectives of the cooperation.

Regional Development Strategy

The Regional Development Strategy is closely linked to the R&D Strategy. The objectives of the strategies converge. Laurea enriches the know-how of its area of operation with international top-level expertise and promotes the internationalisation of the region. In addition, Laurea strengthens the innovation capacity of its area of operation and creates favourable conditions for innovation activities.

4.4 Quality assurance actors and activities

Laurea’s organisation consists of two regional units, seven local units and an administrative unit. Quality assurance is carried out in the entire operational network. Figure 6 shows Laurea’s network of quality assurance actors.



Figure 6. Laurea’s quality assurance actors

The **students** actively participate in the evaluation and improvement of operational quality. The most important channels are the student feedback system and different operational development teams. In addition, the representatives of the Student Union of Laurea University of Applied Sciences (LAU-REAMKO) have regular meetings with Laurea’s steering group during the academic year. Consultation meetings are organised at the Laurea level as well as the local unit level. The student’s role in Laurea’s quality assurance process and the opportunities to contribute in it are described in the Student’s Quality Assurance Handbook.

The **staff members** participate in quality assurance activities by planning, implementing, evaluating, developing and documenting them. They also participate in the search for good practices and the identification of development areas.

The **directors of the local units** and the **development managers** ensure that the quality assurance system functions properly and that the regions and local units exploit the data produced by it.

The **quality experts** participate in the quality assurance activities of their units. Their tasks include planning and implementing internal audits as well as preparing reports and providing information on them. In addition, they also organise internal benchmarking events and make the quality work visible. In their local units, the quality experts also handle the operational quality development tasks separately assigned to them.

The **student feedback coordinators** organise the implementation of the student feedback process of their local units.

The **owners of the processes** and the **process experts of each local unit** promote the implementation and development of the processes in cooperation with local unit directors, other employees, students and labour market representatives.

Coordinators have been defined for the activities presented in the **service description**. The coordinators are responsible for the implementation, evaluation and development of the services in cooperation with the staff.

The **Quality Assurance Manager** systematises and develops Laurea's quality assurance system as a whole and monitors its implementation. His/her tasks include preparing the quality assurance operating plan every year, planning and organising external evaluations and audits, updating the Quality Assurance Handbook and being in charge of quality-related documentation and communications. Also internal audits, internal and external benchmarking sessions and orientation and training events on quality assurance activities belong to the tasks. In addition, the Quality Assurance Manager presents quality-related matters to the extensive steering group, the development team of the quality assurance system and the regional directors.

The **Quality Assistant Trainee** works with the Quality Assurance Manager and, at the same time, does the practical training related to his/her studies at Laurea while working on the development of Laurea's quality. The duration of the practical training is 3–6 months.

The tasks of the **development team of the quality assurance system** are to develop, monitor and evaluate the student feedback system and quality assurance system, to develop the indicators for the Strategy Implementation Plan 2010–2012 and to prepare an external audit for each object to be audited. The team prepares the matters to be handled for the extensive steering group.

The tasks of the **extensive steering group** are to promote the combination of strategic work and management, to direct quality assurance work and to ensure the exploitation of the data produced by the quality assurance system in the decision-making process and in Laurea's operational development.

The **Board of the maintaining organisation (Laurea Oy)** approves Laurea's strategy.

The **Board of Laurea University of Applied Sciences** approves the Quality Assurance Handbook and the overall architecture of the quality assurance system.

The **President** is responsible for the functionality of the quality assurance system and provides operating instructions concerning Laurea's entire quality assurance system.

The **regional advisory boards, International Advisory Board (IAB), labour market representatives and other stakeholder representatives** evaluate and improve the quality of Laurea's operations in cooperation with the steering group, staff and students.

5 Operations

Laurea's operations are described as four processes. The operational processes are closely connected with Laurea's strategic policies. Objectives and indicators have been defined for the processes in the Strategy Implementation Plan.

The Learning by Developing process, which integrates regional development, pedagogy and research and development, has been chosen as the core process. The core process is supported by the Education process, the Strategy and Management process and the HR process.

The functions that support the operational processes are shown in Laurea's service description, which contains different functions as well as their monitoring, evaluation and development methods. Laurea's core process and support processes are shown in Figure 7 with their sub-processes.

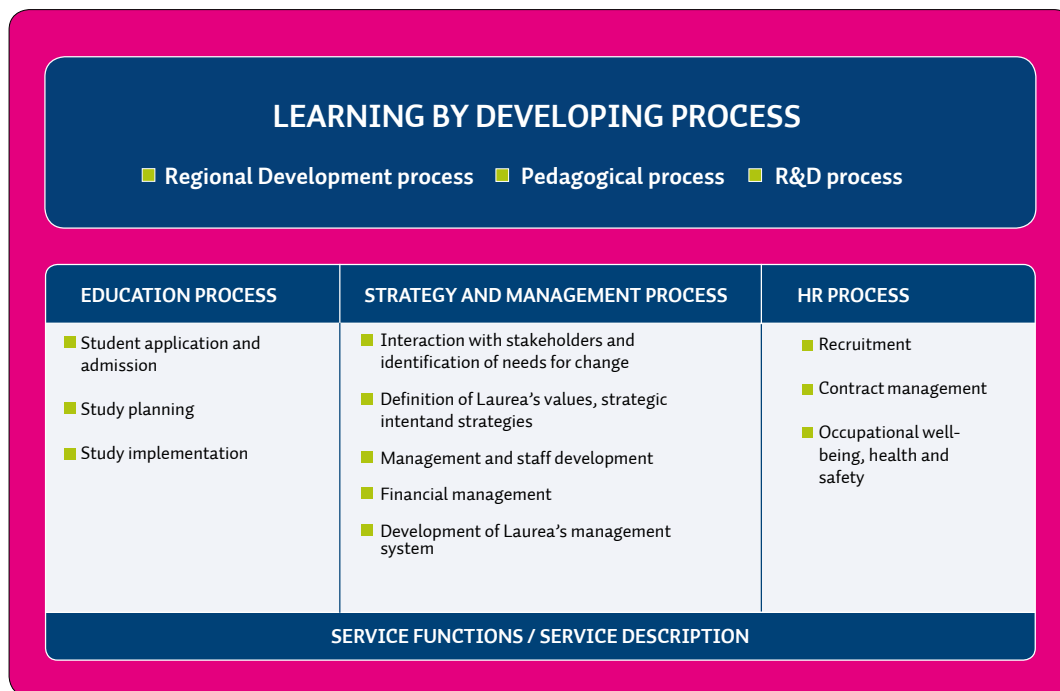


Figure 7. Laurea's process map

Learning by Developing process, core process

The integration of regional development, pedagogy and research and development is implemented by the Learning by Developing process chosen as the core process. The aim of the Learning by Developing process is to produce high-quality learning. The aim of the process is also to anticipate the changes occurring in the operating environment and to influence them. The operational objectives are to develop new future-oriented know-how, to promote the employment of students and to carry out effective innovation activities to be used, for example, for commercial purposes.

Education process, support process

The aim of the Education process is to handle centralised student applications and student affairs services as an official task. The purpose is to fulfil the curriculum in accordance with the Pedagogical Strategy. The aim is that students will develop learning and professional growth in line with their personal study plans and that the studies will progress smoothly.

Strategy and Management process, support process

The objective of the Strategy and Management process is to lead the expert organisation in the direction of the strategic intent so that the strategic objectives are fulfilled and the operations are purposeful and productive. Management at Laurea consists of strategic leadership and target-oriented creation of opportunities in a communal, reciprocal process.

HR process, support process

The HR process is based on Laurea's HR programme. The objective of the HR process is a committed and motivated staff. The goal is a healthy staff with know-how appropriate to the strategic objectives.

Service functions

Laurea has support services that promote the operational processes. These services are described in Laurea's service description. The support services are developed in the operating environment in question. The service description contains different functions as well as their monitoring, evaluation and development methods.

6 Operation monitoring and evaluation

The Strategy Implementation Plan sets the key evaluation criteria. The plan defines the success factors for a specific period. The factors can be considered key to the fulfilment of strategies and strategic intent. Indicators and target levels are set for these critical success factors. The Strategy Implementation Plan for 2007–2009 defines the dimensions of Laurea's critical success factors, which are research and development, regional development, Learning by Developing (LbD), educational process, quality assurance and know-how management. The achievement of the operational objectives is examined for each process through the evaluation objects derived from the above-mentioned factors. The monitoring and evaluation objects for each process are shown in Figure 8.

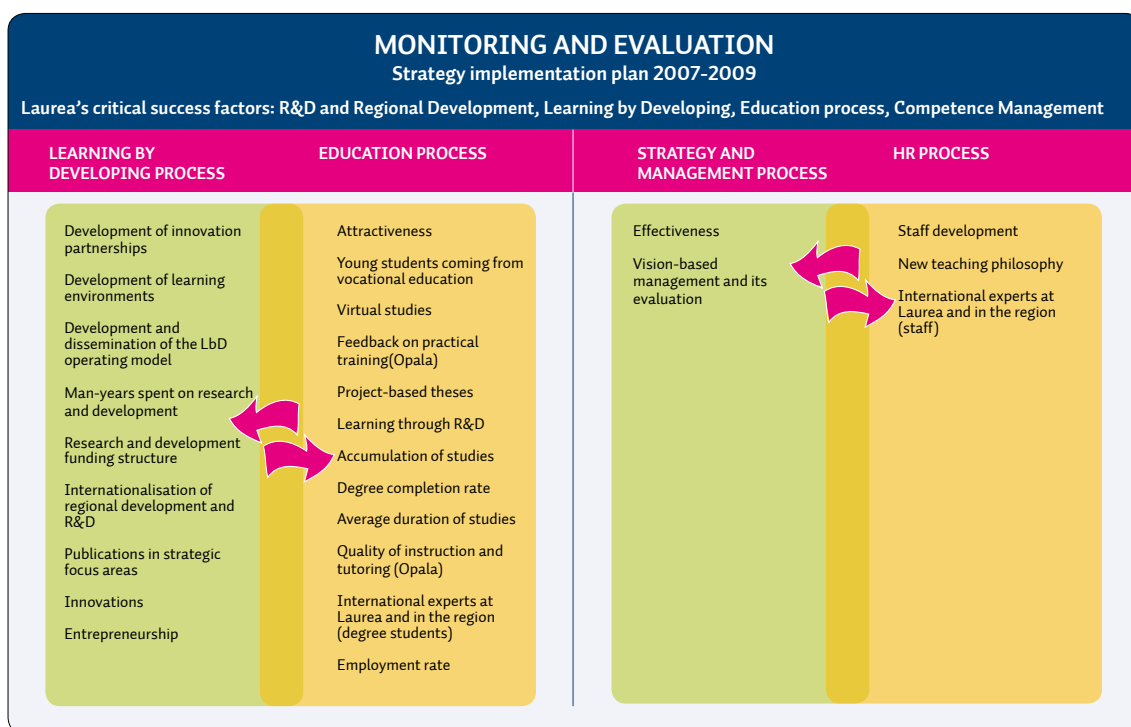


Figure 8. Laurea's operational monitoring and evaluation objects

The objects of the evaluation of the Learning by Developing process and Education process produce development-supporting evaluation data related to both processes. The objects of the evaluation of the Strategy and Management process and HR process produce mutually supporting evaluation data.

Learning by Developing process

Development of innovation partnerships

Innovation partnerships with the business sector and international R&D partners are developed and new partnerships with innovative SMEs arise in the chosen clusters. The development of partnerships makes use of Laurea's involvement in regional advisory boards, its cooperation with stakeholders and network analyses.

Development of learning environments

Working in learning environments is related to R&D programme projects and Laurea's strategic choices.

Development and dissemination of the LbD operating model

Laurea will publish 10 publications and 15 articles on the development of the LbD operating model in Finnish and international journals and will also give presentations on the topic at seminars and conferences. The LbD operating model will be part of the theoretical framework of at least three PhD theses. A national seminar on the LbD operating model will be arranged annually.

The LbD operating model will be developed through international cooperation. An international evaluation of the model from the point of view of the overall tasks of a university of applied sciences will be conducted in 2008 and an international seminar will be held in connection with it.

Man-years spent on research and development

The number of man-years spent on R&D (by staff and students) will grow by approx. 30% from 2006 to 2009 (Ministry of Education's target).

Research and development funding structure

In terms of the R&D funding structure, the proportion of external funding out of operational income will rise to 10% by 2009.

Internationalisation of regional development and R&D work

Laurea promotes the internationalisation of the innovation environment. In fact, it enriches the know-how of its area of operation with international top-level expertise and promotes the internationalisation of the region (participation in international research programmes). Each regional unit participates in 1-3 international cooperation projects.

The international mobility of researchers and trainees in research programmes and regional activities will increase. The projects involve students and long-term expert exchanges. Research cooperation will be developed in a target-oriented way by seeking international know-how in line with Laurea's research objectives. Innovation partnerships with international R&D partners will increase.

The number of international publications made in strategic focus areas is to increase by 30%.

Publications in strategic focus areas

The number of publications is to grow by 30% between 2006 and 2009.

Innovations

Each regional unit's area will create at least one top innovation per year, with a significant impact on labour market development (usability). In coming up with and developing innovations, Laurea works in close cooperation with its strategic partners.

Entrepreneurship

Each regional unit offers at least one student-oriented entrepreneurship path and an entrepreneurship-based learning environment. The number of companies created through the universities of applied sciences and the number of student-run or R&D-based companies and jobs will increase.

Education process

Attractiveness

Laurea's attractiveness is on the rise and the aim is to receive from young students 3.4 first-choice applications per starting place (3.5 in 2007 and 2008 and 3.6 in 2009).

Young students coming from vocational education

The proportion of young students coming from vocational education will reach 25% by 2009 (Ministry of Education's target).

Virtual studies

The amount of virtual studies will reach the relative target set by the Ministry of Education by 2009 (Laurea's target about 16,800 cr).

Feedback on practical training (Opala)

The average grade received by Laurea's practical training in student feedback exceeds the Finnish average.

Project-based theses

The proportion of project-based theses out of all theses will exceed the Ministry of Education's target in 2009 (Ministry of Education's target 80%).

Learning through R&D

The number of credits completed in R&D according to the curriculum will increase annually by 20% by 2009.

Accumulation of studies

The proportion of the young students who have completed at least 45 credits per year will reach 65% by 2009 (Ministry of Education's target).

Degree completion rate

At Laurea, the rate of completion of university of applied sciences degrees within five years of starting exceeds the Finnish average during the period under review and is to reach the Ministry of Education's target by 2009 (Ministry of Education's target 63.5%).

Average duration of studies

The average duration of studies is below the national average for both young and adult students.

Quality of instruction and tutoring (Opala)

The average grade received by Laurea's instruction and tutoring in student feedback exceeds the Finnish average and will reach 3.5 by 2009.

International experts at Laurea and in the region (degree students)

The Regional Strategy for Universities in the Metropolitan Area, particularly the parts related to internationalisation at home, will be implemented at Laurea both internally and in cooperation with other higher education institutions in the area.

The aim is to turn Laurea into an effective recruitment channel for international experts. The number of international degree students coming from countries that are strategically important for the internationalisation of the metropolitan area will increase. The objective is to have 350 foreign students in 2009 (Ministry of Education's target 5,000 for all universities of applied sciences). Instead of quantities, the development of international student mobility will focus on quality and content.

Employment rate

The employment rate of Laurea graduates exceeds the national average.

Strategy and Management process

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the Strategy and Management process is evaluated from the point of view of the results achieved and the targets specified in the Strategy Implementation Plan and set by the Ministry of Education.

Vision-based management and its evaluation

The main focus of the renewal and development of Laurea's management know-how is on leadership know-how and process development.

HR process

Staff development

In relation to the LbD operating model, training in guidance and tutoring will be organised for the staff between 2007 and 2009. Also different kinds of language courses and courses related to international and multicultural communications, interaction and guidance will be organised for the staff. LbD training is being planned and organised for all employees. The aim is that all employees will take the training between 2007 and 2009.

A Renewing Teaching development programme will be organised in 2007-2009 for lecturers. The objectives of the programme are to promote changes in teaching in connection with the LbD operating model, to increase the R&D skills of the lecturers and to reform the pedagogical principles of the universities of applied sciences in order to respond to challenges.

Teacher transformation

Teacher transformation is making significant progress. The number of man-years spent on research out of the total number of full-time lecturers should be 25% by 2009.

International experts at Laurea and in the region (staff)

The Regional Strategy for Universities in the Metropolitan Area, particularly the parts related to internationalisation at home, will be implemented at Laurea both internally and in cooperation with other higher education institutions in the area. International cooperation will be used to bring in top-level expertise from the labour market and higher education institutions around the world. Laurea will become an effective channel for the recruitment of international experts and the number of international employees will grow. The needs of the R&D environment are taken into account in staff recruitment. Instead of quantities, the development of international staff mobility will focus on quality and content. The mobility system is related to the planning and implementation of R&D projects.

7 Operational development

The quality of Laurea's operations is improved by implementing the operational processes and with the aid of the methods, procedures and tools described in them. The different development methods produce feedback and evaluation data that can be used as the starting point for development work. Promoting operational quality requires regular and systematic development work. The development methods, procedures and tools chosen for the operational processes are shown in Figure 9.

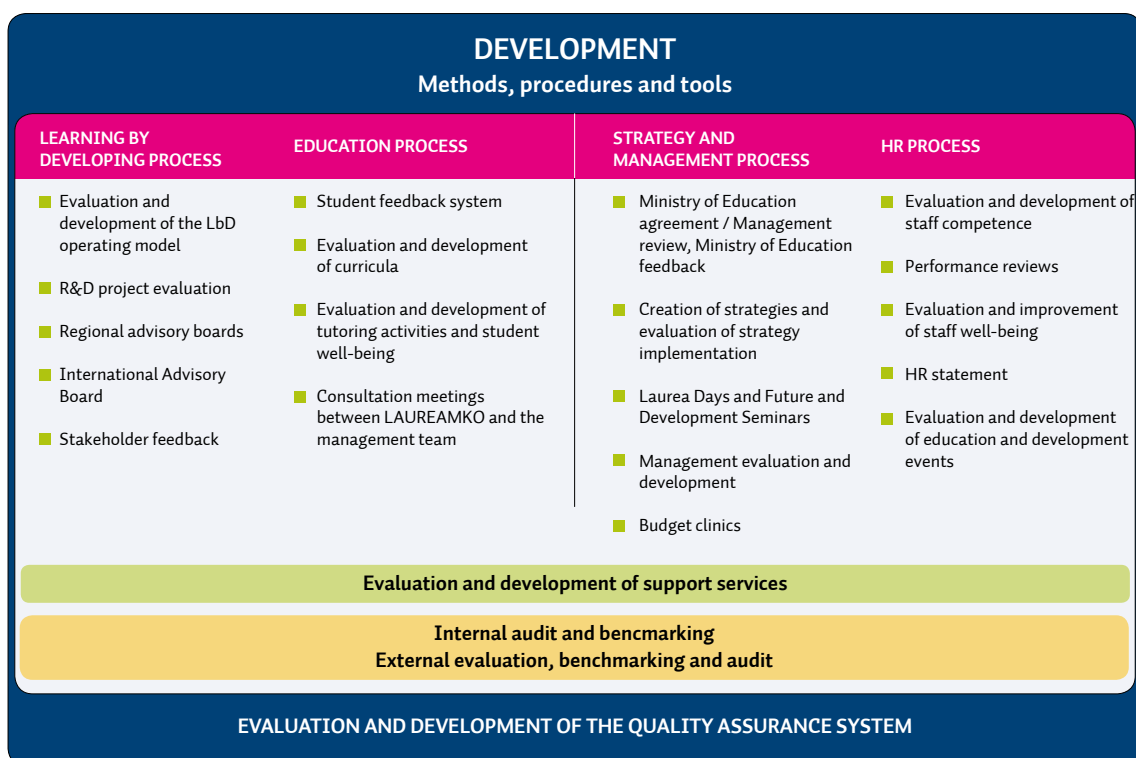


Figure 9. Methods, procedures and tools for the development of Laurea's quality assurance system

The following section presents the methods, procedures and tools of the development system. The development methods of the Learning by Developing process and Education process support each other. The development of the processes promotes Laurea's student-centred operations.

The Strategy and Management process and the HR process support each other. The development of the processes promotes the know-how of Laurea's staff.

7.1 Development of the Learning by Developing process and Education process

Learning by Developing process

Evaluation and development of the LbD operating model

The LbD operating model is developed on the basis of external and internal evaluation feedback, research, staff training and learning environment self-evaluations. The external evaluation of the LbD operating model is carried out in connection with international conferences related to the model. Evaluation feedback is used in the development of operating practices, curricula and learning environments.

R&D project evaluation

The evaluation of R&D projects is carried out as a pre-evaluation or an evaluation of effectiveness in accordance with a model of the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation (TEKES) under development. Evaluation data can be used, for example, in the development of the project process. The feedback data related to project effectiveness can be used to evaluate the success of the projects.

Regional advisory boards

The regional advisory boards develop Laurea's competitiveness by tightening Laurea's connection with the innovation system and social decision-making process. The regional advisory boards act as expertise forums that come up with initiatives for developing and implementing regional strategies and programmes and provide statements on request on matters related to developing the region or its labour market. The regional advisory boards help obtain silent preliminary data for Laurea's decision-making process. In addition, they evaluate the effectiveness of regional development.

The members of the boards represent the functionary leadership of Laurea Oy's shareholders, the business sector, officials and organisations involved in regional development and innovation, other educational institutions and any other necessary expertise. The regional advisory boards of Espoo and Vantaa convene 2–3 times a year. Additional meetings are held as needed.

International Advisory Board (IAB)

Laurea's International Advisory Board (IAB) supports Laurea in the management and development according to the vision. The main objective of the term of office 2009–2012 is to promote Laurea's strategic intent, which is to develop into an internationally recognised higher education institution by 2015. The cooperation between Laurea and IAB is based on shared professional interest in a developing international higher education institution that rises to the future challenges of a global operating environment.

IAB acts as an expertise forum and implements Laurea's bilateral operational cooperation with the IAB members and their background communities. IAB transfers to Laurea forecast, benchmarking and network data related to the development of the labour market and of higher education institutions around the world. As an expertise forum, it takes initiatives, evaluates and gives statements.

The IAB members represent seven different scientific higher education institutions in the USA, the UK, Portugal, Japan and South Africa. They are recognised experts in the higher education world and they have extensive experience in cooperation between higher education institutions and the labour market as well as in evaluation and financing.

Stakeholder feedback

In addition to regional advisory boards, also other stakeholders provide assessments and feedback in order to improve the quality of Laurea's operations. Feedback is regularly received from graduates and the labour market and is used to anticipate the needs of the labour market as well as to develop and implement the curricula.

Education process

Student feedback system

The purpose of Laurea's student feedback system is to produce systematic and comparable feedback data that can be used by different actors in quality assurance and operational development as well as in strategic, operational and pedagogical planning. Feedback is gathered regularly from all degree students.

In order to meet the objectives, the questions of the feedback questionnaires are derived from the contents and know-how targets related to the different stages of the studies as well as from Laurea's shared quality targets and strategic objectives. In order to ensure know-how quality, the questions of the feedback questionnaires are related to Laurea's shared generic competences (study unit feedback) and the competences of graduates nationwide (summary feedback questionnaires).

The development team of Laurea's quality assurance system is responsible for the contents, development and uniformity of the student feedback system. The directors of the local units and the feedback coordinators are responsible for its implementation and the use of the results together with the other quality assurance actors of the unit. The results of the student feedback questionnaires are handled together with students and staff. The results should be used in many different ways in the development of Laurea's operations. The student feedback system is developed by means of self-evaluations.

Evaluation and development of curricula

The curricula of each degree programme are regularly evaluated once a year. The curriculum areas to be evaluated are set by the pedagogical team. Also student and labour market representatives participate in the evaluation of the curricula. The directors of the local units are responsible for ensuring that the evaluation of the curricula is carried out for each degree programme.

New curricula are evaluated on the basis of the evaluation statements the labour market representatives and other external experts are asked to provide. The new degree programme proposals are evaluated by means of a uniform evaluation form. The steering group handles the proposals before sending them to the Ministry of Education.

Curricula are also developed using a study workload questionnaire intended for students. Steering groups from all degree programmes participate in the evaluation and development of Master's degree curricula.

Evaluation and development of tutoring activities and student well-being

Tutoring supports the student during the entire study path so that he/she can receive the necessary guidance and his/her studies can progress in accordance with the personal study plan.

Training in guidance and tutoring is regularly organised for the staff. The students' feedback questionnaires related to the different stages of the studies and well-being questionnaire show Laurea the direction in which to develop its tutoring activities.

The physical conditions and accessibility of structures at Laurea are mapped as part of the development of the students' well-being. The mapping is carried out for each local unit by a nurse, a special education teacher, an educational host/hostess and a senior lecturer. The accessibility of the local units is regularly examined once per academic year.

Consultation meetings between LAUREAMKO and the steering group

The consultation meetings between LAUREAMKO and the steering group are joint consultation and discussion events. The aim is to take into account the students' points of view in the development of the operations. The representatives of LAUREAMKO's Board and Laurea's President, Vice-presidents, Administrative Director and Development Director meet four times per academic year. LAUREAMKO's division representatives and the directors and development directors of the local units have regular meetings at the local units.

7.2 Development of the Strategy and Management process and HR process

Strategy and Management process

Ministry of Education agreement / Management review, Ministry of Education feedback

The preparation of the agreement between Laurea and the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education agreement) is related to the management review, in which Laurea's strategic management is evaluated from the point of view of the most important objectives and failures. The Ministry of Education gives Laurea feedback on the operations during the negotiations for the agreement and, in the future, in the form of written feedback. The results of the management review and the feedback of the Ministry of Education are exploited in the selection of the matters Laurea needs to develop. The President is responsible for the Ministry of Education agreement. The negotiations for the agreement are attended by the limited company's Chairman of the Board, the President / Managing Director and other top management representatives.

Creation of strategies and evaluation of the Strategy Implementation Plan

Laurea's strategies are updated every 3-5 years. The steering group representatives are responsible for the preparation of the strategies according to their duties. The expertise of Laurea's staff and the expert network formed by the regional advisory boards are used in the preparation. In the renewal process, Laurea's staff and steering group and the Board of the maintaining organisation analyse and forecast the changes taking place in the operating environment and define Laurea's position in the changing environment. Some of the key issues are developments and demands of educational and industrial policy, changes in operating conditions and Laurea's status in its network of partners.

Laurea's Strategy Implementation Plan is prepared for the periods of validity of the agreement to be signed with the Ministry of Education. The achievement of the critical success factors described in the Strategy Implementation Plan is measured every year through interim evaluations and at the end of the planning period through a final evaluation. The evaluation results are examined with the staff at the Future and Development Seminars as well as by the regional directors and Laurea's steering group. On the basis of the evaluation, the development targets and the measures to achieve them are defined for Laurea as well as for local and regional units. The President, Vice-presidents and directors of local units are responsible for the procedure.

Laurea Days and Future and Development Seminars

The Laurea Days and Future and Development Seminars are communal development events for the whole staff. At least two regional Laurea Days and one common Laurea Day for all universities of applied sciences are organised every year. The topics of the Laurea Days are the operating environment and operational objectives of the organisation. Future and Development Seminars are arranged in each region at least twice per academic year. At the seminars, the employees are encouraged through an interactive process to participate in Laurea's strategic activities and development work.

Management evaluation and development

Leadership is evaluated with leadership surveys. The point of these surveys is to develop and reform Laurea's leadership. The employees are surveyed annually. The survey results are used as the basis for the management development programme.

Budget clinics

Budget clinics are used to make budgets for each operating unit and to examine resource use in relation to the operational and financial targets of the following financial year. In addition, the attendees discuss matters that affect the financial situation in the longer term, such as changes in funding, result tracking as well as recruitment and investment needs. The budget clinics are attended by the Administrative Director, the Vice-presidents, the directors of the local units and the Head of Accounting. The outcome is a budget proposal for the following year for each local unit.

HR process

Evaluation and development of staff know-how

The development of staff know-how is based on strategic objectives. Laurea defines the shared core competences that are linked to the generic competences of the curriculum. The core competences are mapped by the staff using self-evaluations. Know-how is mapped every year by means of a questionnaire in connection with the preparation of performance reviews. The results are used to map educational needs and to develop and deepen staff know-how.

Performance reviews

All Laurea's staff members undergo annual performance reviews with their line managers in order to agree on the main objectives for the year as well as on the personal development targets and how to meet them. There are common general instructions and an electronic system for performance reviews.

Evaluation and improvement of staff well-being

Staff well-being is evaluated and improved through performance reviews. The aim is to proactively intervene in order to prevent the situations from progressing further. The occupational health care unit regularly maps coping at work with the "Resources at Work" survey.

HR statement

The HR statement is a summary of staff-related data that describes staff contributions and investments, the implementation of the equality principle and the state of health of the staff. The HR statement is used as a tool for developing the staff and working conditions and handling employment-related matters.

Evaluation and development of education and development events

Feedback is also collected on Laurea's internal training and is used to develop new training sessions. Feedback is collected systematically of staff's international mobility. The feedback is used to improve the international activities.

7.3 Service development

Each service is developed in its implementation environment. The development methods are described in the process description.

The most important support services are also evaluated and developed by means of a support service questionnaire for students and staff.

7.4 Evaluations, audits and sharing good practices as developers of operations

Laurea's operations are developed by means of internal audits, external evaluations and audits and development methods for operational processes as well as by sharing internal and external good practices. The external audit of the quality assurance system is carried out by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC).

Internal and external benchmarking

Internal benchmarking is the transmission of good practices within Laurea. The objectives of the method are mutual learning, harmonisation of operating systems and procedures and to draw attention to the good practices of local units / degree programmes. The benchmarking themes are determined on the basis of the development objectives of the University of Applied Sciences. Laurea also participates in the external benchmarking events related to good practices as needed. The purpose of external benchmarking events is to identify good practices and share them between higher education institutions.

Completed internal and external benchmarking sessions:

2003	Thesis process
2004	Learning by Developing
2006	Learning by Developing II
2006	Guidance and counselling
2007	Practical training as a way of promoting professional growth in universities of applied sciences Learning by Developing (LbD) operating model in practical training
2007–2008	Shared benchmarking (Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences, Oulu University of Applied Sciences + Laurea)
2008	Innovation activities (LbD)

Internal audit

Internal audits are systematically conducted in each local unit once per academic year. Internal audits are used to support the development of Laurea's and the unit's operations. The objects of the audit are determined on the basis of the development objectives of the University of Applied Sciences. Laurea's Internal Audit Handbook describes how to prepare for, plan, conduct, report on and evaluate internal audits.

Completed/upcoming internal audits:

1998	Themes chosen by the degree programmes
1999	Language studies and degree programmes in English
2000	Student selection and degree programmes in English
2001	Languages and tutoring services/personal study plans
2002	Tutoring, thesis tutoring and ECTS system functionality
2007	Feedback (LbD) and use of feedback data
2008	Innovation activities (LbD)
2009	Education process
2009	Laurea's / local units' quality assurance and its documentation

External evaluations

The aim of participating in external evaluations is to receive independent external feedback for the development of Laurea's operations. The materials or other items needed for these evaluations are prepared by a team appointed for the task within the schedule of each process.

Completed/upcoming external evaluations and benchmarking sessions:

1998	National evaluation of health care education
1998	Evaluation of licence application
2001	Assessment for centre of excellence in regional development
2003	Assessment for centre of excellence in regional development (centre of excellence 2003–2005)
2003	National evaluation of social services education
2005	Assessment for centre of excellence in education (centre of excellence 2005–2006)
2006	Assessment for centre of excellence in regional development (centre of excellence 2006–2007)
2007–2008	International LbD evaluation
2008	Assessment for centre of excellence in education (centre of excellence 2008–2009)
2008	International LbD conference: LbD evaluation
2008	HAMK-Laurea cross-evaluation: Linkage of the quality assurance system to management and operational direction
2009	Assessment for centre of excellence in education
2009	Diploma Supplement Label
2009	HAMK-Laurea cross-evaluation: Participation of the staff, students and external stakeholders of the higher education institution in quality assurance activities
2009	Further international LbD evaluation
2010	International LbD conference: LbD evaluation

External audit

The audit of quality assurance systems has been developed to support higher education institutions and to show that Finland uses a qualified and consistent quality assurance system for higher education institutions. The purpose of the audit is to ensure that the higher education institution has a quality assurance system that supports the continuous development of the operations, works in line with set targets, results in development measures and is internationally reliable.

Quality assurance in higher education has been defined as one of the central areas of development for forming the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. Many European countries have developed diverse national solutions for evaluating and proving the quality of their higher education degrees in relation to the Bologna Process.

In Finland, higher education institutions are responsible for education as well as for the quality of their other activities. Each higher education institution builds the quality assurance system that best suits its

needs. The higher education institution decides and is responsible for the special objectives of quality assurance, the methods to be used and the ways in which the methods can be developed.

Laurea's quality assurance system will be audited in autumn 2010. The purpose of the audit of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) is to assess what kind of processes and procedures Laurea uses to maintain and develop the quality of educational and other activities, whether the quality assurance process is according to the objectives set by Laurea and whether the quality assurance system produces suitable data from the point of view of operational development and leads to effective development measures that improve quality.

7.5 Evaluation and development of the quality assurance system

The strategies are developed in a reciprocal process with the development of the quality assurance system. The task of a large steering group is to promote the linkage of strategic work and management to quality assurance.

The quality assurance system is evaluated and developed through self-evaluations. The self-evaluation of the quality assurance system is carried out according to the evaluation areas and criteria of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council.

Completed/upcoming self-evaluations of the quality assurance system:

2006	Self-evaluation of the quality assurance system
2008	Self-evaluation of the quality assurance system
2009	Self-evaluation of the quality assurance system
2010	Self-evaluation of the quality assurance system (carried out by students)

Laurea's quality assurance system is evaluated and developed by means of different quality-related training and development events. The sectors of the quality assurance system are developed using self-evaluations (e.g. self-evaluation of the student feedback system).

The quality assurance system is evaluated and developed by HAMK University of Applied Sciences, Lahti University of Applied Sciences, Laurea University of Applied Sciences and Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. These universities of applied sciences have signed a partnership agreement the purpose of which is to increase and strengthen cooperation, profile operations, actively look together for means to promote cooperation with the business sector, and serve the needs of the Greater Helsinki area in a customer-oriented way. Cross-evaluations are conducted in order to evaluate and develop the quality assurance system of Laurea and its partner universities of applied sciences. Laurea conducted a cross-evaluation together with HAMK University of Applied Sciences in autumn 2008. The cross-evaluation will be conducted again in autumn 2009.

Completed/upcoming cross-evaluations:

2008	HAMK-Laurea cross-evaluation: Linkage of the quality assurance system to management and operational direction
2009	HAMK-Laurea cross-evaluation: Participation of staff, students and stakeholders in quality assurance activities.

The staff, students and most important stakeholders are encouraged to participate in and commit to the communal development of Laurea's quality assurance activities. The most important stakeholders are the Board of the maintaining organisation (Laurea Oy), the Board of Laurea University of Applied Sciences, the International Advisory Board, the regional advisory boards, the Student Union of Laurea University of Applied Sciences (LAUREAMKO) and different operator networks such as the network of development directors and the network of the quality managers and planners of the universities of applied sciences of the metropolitan area.

Laurea's quality assurance system is also developed by participating in external evaluations and other development projects. The completed external evaluations are described in section 7.4.

Laurea's quality assurance system will be audited by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council in 2010. This is an essential tool for the evaluation and development of the entire quality assurance system.

Appendix 1

Terms

Evaluation

Systematic value determination and evaluation or objective comparison and performance assessment in relation to previously set criteria. At Laurea, evaluation is considered to be a process the aim of which is to highlight development needs and suggestions.

Audit

An audit is an independent external evaluation that clarifies whether the quality assurance system meets the objectives, is efficient and fit for its purpose. During an audit, objectives and operating results are not analysed as such. Instead, the audit evaluates the processes used by the higher education institution to control and improve the quality of educational and other activities.

Bologna Process

The Bologna Process is the Bologna Declaration signed in 1999 by the EU countries during a ministerial conference. The Declaration pertains to a common project for the development of a harmonious and competitive European space for higher education.

Self-evaluation

Evaluation of the operations of a unit or an organisation as well as of the requirements and results of the operations. Self-evaluation can be used to collect information on the object of the evaluation and to develop the operations of higher education institutions. Self-evaluation can be spontaneous or requested by an external actor.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance consists of procedures, processes and systems used to guarantee and improve the quality of Laurea's operations. Quality assurance is carried out using jointly-defined, operation-enhancing and appropriate procedures, methods and tools.

Quality assurance system

The quality assurance system is used to monitor and develop the operations in a systematic way. Furthermore, the quality assurance system describes the operational starting points and processes, the operation-related matters to be monitored and evaluated and the methods, procedures and tools to be used in development activities.

Quality

Quality is the suitability of procedures, processes and systems in relation to the strategic objectives. The achievement of the objectives is assessed through the evaluation areas specified in the Strategy Implementation Plan.

Quality culture

Quality culture includes quality improvement measures as well as the individual and collective commitment to quality maintenance and improvement.

Stakeholders

At Laurea, stakeholders are actors connected to or interested in Laurea's accomplishments and success.