Quality is…
…achieving common goals.
…giving feedback.
…evaluation and development.
…acting according to common values.
…participating in quality work.

Influence by Participating

As a student you are the best expert in your learning; for their part, teachers are experts in teaching. A successful time as a student is the result of the collaboration between you and the people working at the Kemi-Tornio UAS.

We have created a systematic way to continuously develop the UAS and in particular the teaching. The entity is called the Quality Assurance System of Kemi-Tornio UAS.

Your voice and opinion are needed for developing our school. Your opinion is given directly to your teacher in the course feedback; in the academic year feedback you have the opportunity to evaluate the whole year in greater depth; and in the OPALA questionnaire at the end of your studies you can evaluate your entire time as a student. You can also give suggestions for anything related to studies or student life.

The most effective way to influence is through participation. Student members on the Board of Kemi-Tornio UAS participate in the upper level decision-making. Activity in student organisations is not only rewarding but also guarantees a lively higher education community. As members of working groups, such as the quality group, students provide a valuable and fresh perspective on the development of operations.

The results of a good quality education are: advancing in your studies, getting a job and being successful in working life. By giving feedback, making suggestions and participating in operational planning and development you are also creating your own future.

Riitta Käyhkö
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Quality is a Student's Right and Priority
Quality Is a Student’s Right and Priority

This is the first quality guide written especially for students at Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences. The guide

- describes the quality assurance of education and other activities in KTUAS
- introduces the ways you can participate in improving quality.

Recently quality thinking has become more and more topical, and the reason for quality work in higher education institutions is the international, national and local concern over the competitiveness and quality of education. For you quality is crucial because the quality of education affects the progress of studies, getting a job and building a career. And besides, what would be the point of studying if the studies don’t correspond to your needs and expectations? The student’s point of view regarding quality is important because other stakeholders may have contradicting views about what is education of good quality.

Kemi-Tornio UAS rises to these challenges. We want to offer education of good quality that provides
you personal well-being and high-level professional expertise. In addition, we offer you solid competences for working life. Quality is verified and documented achieving these goals, and good quality simply means satisfaction in the contents and methods of education. A quality assurance system, on the other hand, maintains and develops these activities at Kemi-Tornio UAS.
Student – Expert in Learning

The starting point for quality is quite simple: the student’s well-being creates the foundation for effective learning. The assumption is that the student is able and willing to learn. Learning can happen in various ways: some learn best by reading a book, some learn by following a lecture or by doing in practice. People learn differently, but eventually you are at the core of learning: no one can learn for you. Therefore, reflecting on your own learning and your work is important. The point of education and internships is to pin down and develop your own potential.

Students aren’t left alone. The higher education community offers an environment that enables meeting your personal needs and the needs of working life. Learning also requires professionally skilled teachers and an encouraging emotional atmosphere. To support the student there are a variety of services from the beginning of the studies. Tutoring, personal curriculum planning, thesis guidance, health and curator services as well as parties organised by the Student Union are just some examples of activities to provide support for you. The well-being and participation of the student are also part of good quality. Please visit edu.tokem.fi.
Quality has different meanings. For example, it may indicate cost efficiency or superior quality over competitors. For a higher education community, a more suitable meaning is *customer-oriented quality*. Its goal is to satisfy the needs of the students and other customers, working life and financiers. The students are not only customers of education, but also active *partners* participating in development and decision-making.

The principle of partnership is not happening in the best possible way. In 2007, a benchmarking project report published by The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) stated that one of the primary development challenges is students’ participation in preparation and decision-making as an equal partner in a higher education community. In addition, FINHEEC paid attention to the lack of students’ influence on the curriculum process. The partnership would be a result of long cooperation. Another challenge is to deepen the cooperation and partnership of Kemi-Tornio UAS and international students. *How can we improve the status of a student at Kemi-Tornio UAS?*
All students are experts in learning. Their feedback and participation in development provide important information in what direction the UAS should be developed. Other stakeholders have their vision about good education: the lack of student perspective can distort the big picture.

By participating in quality work you can improve your professional skills and eventually boost your career. Students graduated from universities of applied sciences are expected to be experts in their fields, and nowadays the public sector and businesses are more and more interested in controlling and improving their quality. Awareness of quality work during studies can be a great benefit in working life, but in the future some expertise in quality work can be expected as an essential part of professional skills.
There is a large amount of *unconscious* quality work going on all the time, for example in informal chats at a café. The firm foundation of a quality culture is an inclusive, encouraging, and open atmosphere in which discussions, feedback and ideas are part of everyday life.

Although an encouraging atmosphere is necessary, in itself it’s not enough. There must be guidelines, practices and rules to ensure the use and development of feedback and new innovations in development. Good quality is systematic, organised and transparent: information is logically organised and easily accessible. Comprehensive documentation ensures quality assurance.

A quality assurance system means a common operational standard that a higher education community uses to improve its activities. A QA system consists of quality tools that produce up-to-date evaluation and monitoring data. With the information it is possible to achieve common goals, continuously maintain and develop quality and to develop the quality assurance system itself.

The QA system at KTUAS is based on the principle of constant development (PDCA cycle). The students, the staff and the stakeholders give feed-
back on good practices and development challenges. Evaluation leads to development: long-term can be concentrating on a development challenge that has been spotted from the feedback or further improving a strength. Every phase of planning, doing, checking and acting consist of tools that are connected to each other.

A QA system is more than the sum of its parts because the quality tools are connected to each other. The central activities, described as management, supporting and core processes, are developed according to the principle of the PDCA cycle. Achieving the long term goal in the centre is the most important.

The next chapters discuss the following topic step by step:

- feedback systems and the student’s role in the feedback system
- the student in development
- the purpose and content of strategy
- Core and supporting processes
Figure 1. KTUAS Quality assurance system.
Improvement by Feedback

You can give feedback from
- courses in WinhaOpaali
- the whole academic year (tutoring teacher)
- all the studies (OPALA)
- supporting services (library services etc)

You can give feedback about courses in *WinhaOpaali*, where numeric and verbal feedback about contents and methods from the courses are collected. In addition, you give feedback about you learning, so giving feedback is also self-evaluation, which helps you to learn your strengths and weaknesses. The feedback is also collected after every academic year; the standards and procedures vary according to the field of study. OPALA feedback is given just before graduation and it covers the whole studentship. You can also give suggestions for anything related to studies or student life at edu.tokem.fi.

Unfortunately the students don’t give much feedback: only about 20% of KTUAS students give feedback on courses, the international students even less. Too little feedback can distort the big
picture. If only one fifth give feedback, what are the rest 80% thinking? *In short: do not hesitate to give feedback!*

Good feedback is constructive and based on facts. Remember to also give positive feedback to ensure the use of good practices. Feedback is important to make sure that development and planning are based on facts. By giving feedback you influence the quality of education!

The Course of Feedback

The course of the feedback is as described on the next page. The primary feedback channel is straight feedback to the teacher. The teacher gives feedback on the learning of a student or student group. The teacher also informs the students what actions are to be made on the basis of the feedback. In the fields of study the feedback affects the renewal process of curricula. The students can make sure that the feedback has an effect by lobbying on local and national level. The quality working group develops feedback systems and provides information on quality work. The quality working group has student members.

The feedback has a variety of uses. It is used to develop and plan activities to meet the needs and expectations of the students. The development and planning activities are based on feedback. The feedback is used systematically: therefore, it is easier to react faster to the changes in quality. The feedback is necessary for development, but development also requires an accurate interpretation of the feedback. That’s why the students play an important role in development, too.
Figure 2. Course of Feedback
One of the development targets at Kemi-Tornio UAS is encouraging the students to participate in the development at KTUAS. The representatives of the students already take part in preparation and decision-making for example on the Board of UAS and in different working groups: the quality working group also has student members. The students’ organisations, students’ association KETO-AKKU and associations in the field studies are working on quality issues for their own part.

The role of students is important in evaluating the quality and quality assurance of the fields of study. The student members participate in management reviews that examine and evaluate the quality of a field of study. The purpose is to support and encourage development in the fields of study.

External audits help to gather independent information about the state and development needs of the UAS. To evaluate quality assurance The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) audits all the quality assurance systems of higher education institutions in Finland. The point of an external audit is to pin down the qualitative objectives and to evaluate how the institution maintains and develops the quality and the functionality of the quality assurance system. External audits measure the quality of the quality assurance system, not how good education the institution gives. Kemi-Tornio UAS will be audited in spring 2010.
KETOAKKU

KETOAKKU (The student Union of Kemi-Tornio UAS) represents all the students. The union’s primary concern is to act as a students’ interest group for the decision-making at Kemi-Tornio UAS and to support the student in everything concerning his or her studies. The union is open to everyone who studies at Kemi-Tornio UAS. The Union is also a member of the national interest group SAMOK, which promotes students’ interests in various fields of activities, for example in social policy or international affairs.


Student bodies

Student bodies are organisations in each unit. They guide issues concerning the particular field of study, but they also organise tutoring for international students. Student bodies include TOKKO ry, Kemin kauppaopiskelijat ry, KETOSOK ry, KETOTERVE ry and Kemin in-sinööriopiskelijat ry. For further information please check www.edu.tokem.fi.
Planning Provides Directions

Development leads to deliberate planning. The quality assurance system of Kemi-Tornio UAS is guided by written and documented goal-setting. The most important document is the strategy, which defines, for example, the aims concerning the students. The central development challenges are making the teaching and learning processes more efficient, meeting the internationalisation challenges and increasing the interaction between learning and working life.

The core of the strategy is mission and vision.

Mission
Kemi-Tornio UAS is a competent educator and developer.

Vision 2012
We are an expert that is nationally and internationally respected in our strategic fields of expertise as a part of the Lapland Higher Education Consortium. Our strength is based on high-level expertise and recognised, innovative know-how.
The values decided and accepted by the whole community guide everything that happens at Kemi-Tornio UAS. The whole community, the management, the staff and the students are obliged to respect and to promote these values. You can also expect the other member of the community to act according to these values. The values are describes as pairs complementing each other: no expertise without wisdom, no creativity without courage and no credibility without trust.

The values of Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences are

Expertise and wisdom means recognising the needs of the customer (student). The collaboration and shared expertise, recognising the uniqueness of the individual and taking responsibility for achieving the common goals are also part of these values.

Creativity and courage means taking challenges that increase the know-how, business and welfare of society and the region. The active search for innovations and the continuous support of individual and collective learning processes are creativity and courage at their best.

Credibility and trust refers to compliance with agreed divisions of tasks, agreements and mutually accepted rules. This also means consistency in all operations and decision-making. The equal treatment of people regardless of age, sex, status, nationality and education is a guiding principle.
The principal functions of Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences are described as processes. The most important functions of KTUAS are core processes.

- Teaching and learning
- Regional impact
- Research, development and innovation activity

Teaching and learning are everyday life of a student. Research, development and innovation activity make sure that education is up-to-date and beneficial for the future. The development of the province Lapland means internships and projects in the public sector and enterprises in the region. These processes constitute the nucleus of the activities at Kemi-Tornio UAS. To make core processes possible, some supporting processes are needed. They are also an essential part of students’ everyday life.
Processes

The prerequisite for good learning is the flawless functioning and target-orientedness of processes. Processes are the very core of a higher education community and their proper functioning is very important for the student.

Supporting Processes

**Student services** play an essential role from applying to Kemi-Tornio UAS to graduation. The services include student grants, curator services, tutoring and student’s welfare services.

**eLearning centre** is responsible for organising and developing Internet-based learning environments at Kemi-Tornio UAS, as well as supporting services.

**Library services** are mostly course books, but also information services. **International services / affairs** helps you in several ways. Other services are **IT services, administrative services** and **property services**.

Are the Processes Functioning as They Should?
Constant development implies that the quality work is always going on and the quality assurance system isn’t finished either. There’s always something to improve and new, better ways to achieve common goals, and sometimes one has to have the wisdom to change the goals. Quality doesn’t necessarily mean flawlessness, but rather the ability to learn from mistakes and the ability to further improve strengths.

Constant development and quality assurance enables the achievement of goals. One purpose of the QA is to support the students in succeeding in their studies, in their lives and eventually help them to get a career. The improvement of the QA requires continuous interaction and dialogue between students, staff and stakeholders. The student’s own activeness in giving feedback and developing the UAS is already a great step towards better quality.
At [http://edu.tokem.fi](http://edu.tokem.fi) you can find important information about quality. There are also links to give feedback through WinhaOpaali and OPALA.

At [www.tokem.fi](http://www.tokem.fi) you will find part A of the quality handbook. It consists of the organisation and guiding principles of quality work and quality policy, just to mention a few topics.

At [www.samok.fi](http://www.samok.fi) you will find important and useful information about students’ interests in Finland. Publications are in Finnish and Swedish.

Visit the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council homepages. FINHEEC has publications translated into English: [www.kka.fi](http://www.kka.fi).
**Course of Feedback**

Lobbying on local and national levels, KETOAKKU, SAMOK Students’ interest in learning and discusses feedback about the quality of education and their studying and learning. The Ministry of Education, financiers and other important stakeholders actively participate in the feedback process.

Reference groups: Ministry of Education, financiers, students, institutional management, external parties, and self-directed development work.

**Degree programme**

- Field of study
- Curriculum
- Degree programme

**Quality working group**

- develops feedback system
- assesses the needs and activities to improve quality

**School level**

- Summaries of the feedback
- Quality working group provides feedback for the students; development plans include strengths, weaknesses, and development areas.

**Planning and budget guide**

- Programs are developed in line with strategic objectives, and management reviews, self assessments (CAF), field of study, degree programme, Quality working group develops feedback information. The Purpose of the feedback is to provide long-term guidelines and guidance for the operations.

**Management reviews**

- CAF (Common Assessment Framework) is a self-evaluation tool for public sector. It is used to evaluate the quality of operations and finances in the shorter term. Operational plan and budget guide gate guide operattions in the shorter term. The purpose of the feedback is to provide long-term guidelines and guidance for the operations.

**Internal audits**

- CAF (Common Assessment Framework) is a self-evaluation tool for public sector. It is used to evaluate the quality of operations and finances in the shorter term. Operational plan and budget guide gate guide operations in the shorter term. The purpose of the feedback is to provide long-term guidelines and guidance for the operations.

**External audits**

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**Strategy**

- The strategy period 2012-2017 defines the purposes, principles (values) and goals (values) of operations. For example, the purpose of the feedback is to provide long-term guidelines and guidance for the operations.

**Strategic plans**

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**Feedback for the students**

- Findings are collected from operations, processes, key development areas and quality deviations. Development plans include strengths, weaknesses, and development areas, and quality deviations. Development plans include strengths, weaknesses, and development areas.

**Development plans**

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**Contracts**

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**BSC (Balanced Scorecard)**

- CAF (Common Assessment Framework) is a self-evaluation tool for public sector. It is used to evaluate the quality of operations and finances in the shorter term. Operational plan and budget guide gate guide operations in the shorter term. The purpose of the feedback is to provide long-term guidelines and guidance for the operations.
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