



## QUALITY THROUGH COOPERATION - SMALL IMPROVEMENTS EVERY DAY

Quality can be achieved by working together, and it is the outcome of every individual in the learning community. This guidebook is aimed especially for the students of Karelia University of Applied Sciences (Karelia UAS) and it has been compiled by students and staff together. The purpose of this guidebook is to give an overview of the Karelia UAS quality management system and students' role on quality assurance.

Each student is responsible for his/her learning. The role of the Karelia UAS staff is to provide guiding and counselling and to create such conditions and environments that promote learning. Student feedback and their active participation play an important part in the development of our Karelia UAS organisation and community.

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## Student's handbook on quality

KARELIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

# **Student's handbook on quality**

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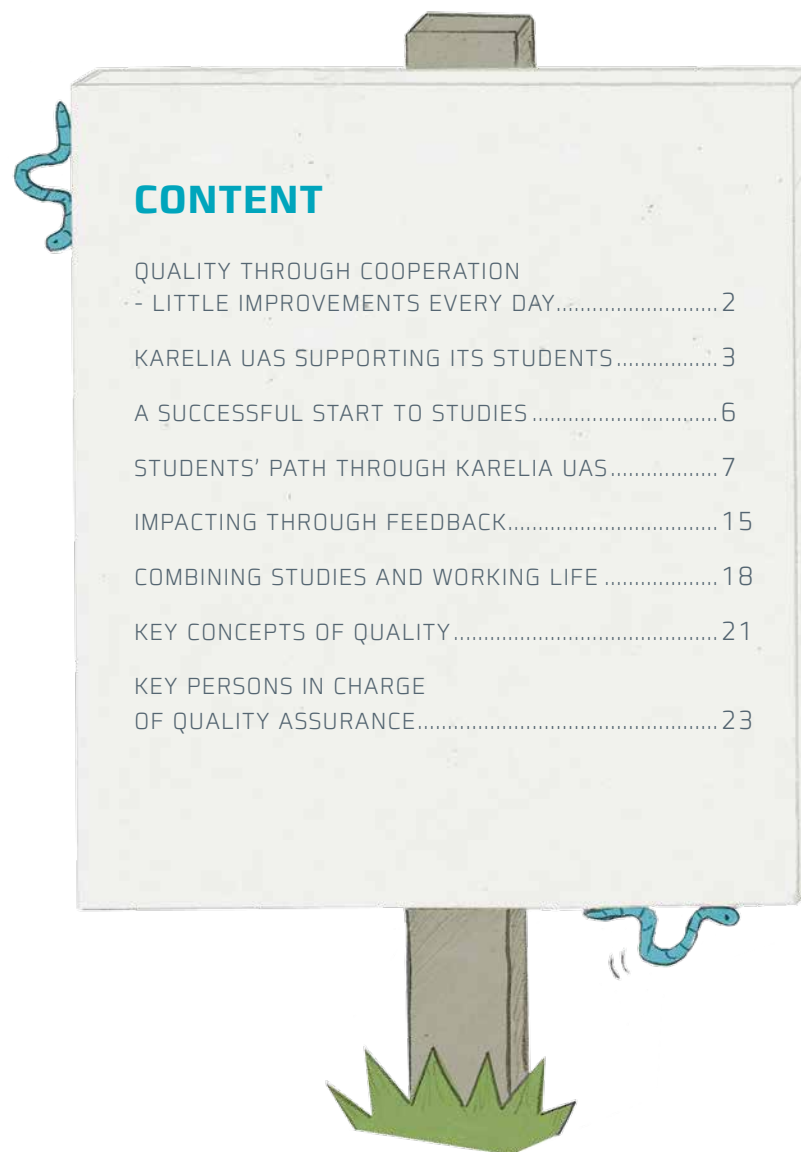
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## QUALITY THROUGH COOPERATION - LITTLE IMPROVEMENTS EVERY DAY

Quality is achieved through cooperation, and we can all make an impact on its development. This quality handbook is meant especially for students of Karelia University of Applied Sciences (Karelia UAS) and it has been compiled by staff and students together. The guide aims at giving an overview of the Karelia UAS quality management system and on students' role in quality assurance.

As Karelia UAS staff, our task is to ensure that you receive up-to-date and high-quality instruction, can study in functional learning environments and have an opportunity to develop yourself, the region and working life. As a student, you are responsible for your own studies and learning. By giving feedback and being involved you can influence the way our university of applied sciences (UAS) develops.

Your feedback has a significant meaning in the development of Karelia UAS. As a student your right is to see the results and interpretations of student feedback, as well as to participate in the discussions where decisions on necessary development measures are made.

In addition to feedback, we would also like you to impact in other ways and to actively participate in all university functions and development activities. Students' interests are especially promoted by the student union POKA, which has an important role in developing the university community.

### Striving forward together

PETRI RAIVO  
President



## KARELIA UAS SUPPORTING ITS STUDENTS

Karelia University is a multi-field university of applied sciences (UAS), the statutory tasks of which include education, research, development and innovation (RDI), and regional development. Karelia UAS is a limited company owned by the City of Joensuu, and the shareholders' meeting having the highest decision-making power. The shareholders' meeting selects the Board of the limited company that is responsible for the company's administration and organizing the operations. The company has a managing director chosen by the Board and who acts as the president of the Karelia University of Applied Sciences. The vice-president is responsible for educational operations of the university.

The Heads of Education are responsible for the results of operations and for the development of operations in their own field of education as well as operate as the immediate superior for the teaching staff. Each member of the staff is responsible for the quality and development of one's own operations. In matters related to your studies, you are assisted by the teacher and peer tutors, the VIP students in your group (VIP= atmosphere of caring), student counsellors, student welfare officer and the representatives of the student union POKA. The subsidiarity principle is applied in Karelia's operations and development work. According to this principle, you should always first contact the nearest person responsible for the matters and questions that concern you. If your problems are not resolved in your own centre, you can always turn, for example, to the Karelia UAS President.

The administration and support services have mainly been centralized on Tikkarinne campus where you can find the library, student services and student welfare services. Many of the services are in e-form. User support related to computing is given by the HelpDesk service. Facility management personnel and caretakers give information on facilities and security. The Head of Study Counselling coordinates the counselling and the Student Welfare Officer supports



you with the challenges of running your everyday life. The City of Joensuu is responsible for student health care. The nurses who serve students work on Tikkarinne campus.

Karelia UAS has an extensive network of partners, which can be of help when you establish contacts to the organisations in your own field of study. The strategic partners of Karelia UAS include University of Eastern Finland, the student union POKA, and North Karelia Municipal Education and Training Consortium that organizes education in various locations in the province. We also co-operate closely with the nearby universities of applied sciences, e.g. in organizing summer studies. Key partners consist of a large body of regional companies and organisations. After your graduation, your role as an alumnus allows you to become part of the Karelia UAS network. You can have more information on quality management from the Karelia UAS Quality Manual available on the Karelia UAS web pages. Additionally, further information can be found in the intranet, which is also partly available for students. Study-focused information and guidance is available in the Pakki student portal. The students' newsletter *Kyyhky* will give you updated information on studying and student life.



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## A SUCCESSFUL START TO STUDIES

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Successful student recruitment and admission are of great importance to every applicant and student and to the university's operation. Student recruitment is a planned activity, which aims at delivering truthful and transparent information on different possibilities and helping the applicant choose the best study option.

Student recruitment is a duty for both staff and students at Karelia UAS. Student are recruited in various recruitment events with marketing material aimed at applicants, and with marketing operations in the Internet and in social media.. The emphasis of marketing is on the experiences of students and alumni and on the competences they have gained through studies. Students have an important role in promotional events, e.g. in school and institutional visits and at recruitment fairs. Karelia has an annual Promo Team of marketing assistant trainees who actively visit schools and educational institutions as well as produce study-related content for the social media channels of Karelia UAS. As a student, you may help the future applicants to get a good picture of Karelia as a studying place and of your own field as an option of study.

Student admission consists of applying and selection phases. Karelia UAS works together with other Finnish universities of applied sciences in the joint application system and admission. All stages of student selection are clearly delegated and instructed. This ensures the fair and impartial treatment of all applicants. If an applicant is dissatisfied with the selection, s/he can appeal for correction. The appeals are dealt with in the Board of UAS limited company, where a student representative also takes part in dealing with the matter.



## STUDENT'S PATH THROUGH KARELIA UAS

*After the torment of waiting, I got the e-mail with the news on Karelia UAS entrance tests. Yeah, I had received a place to study! I just had confirm my study place in Opintopolku and pack my suitcase. But let me tell the whole story, from the first day all the way to the thesis...*



**FIRST DAY – INITIAL INFO:** *The first day was full of excitement. Luckily there were older students and helpful staff around. I received information on student benefits and studies in general.*

Your studies begin with information on the Karelia UAS study environment, and helps you assess your own learning skills and prior learning. At the same time you have a chance to get to know the activities, operational methods and the key persons of Karelia UAS. As a student, it is important for you to be aware of your own rights and obligations, as well as what the studies include. All this has been defined in the Polytechnic Act and Decree and the Karelia UAS degree regulations.

**CURRICULUM & ISP:** *First I got to know the curriculum and started drafting my ISP. The first year went by the book, since I didn't have any prior studies.*

**RPL:** *My new friend Aulikki had quite a different situation: her prior studies were accredited and experience and existing skills recognised. The student counsellor helped her to apply for RPL. Reading books and doing nice assignments in groups is not yet enough. I need to make sure that I earn credits and that they are recorded in WinhaWille. To receive financial aid for students, I have to gain a certain number of credits.*

The recognition and acknowledgement of prior learning (RPL) enables you to include your prior studies, practical training, work experience and competences to your degree. It is recommended that you discuss the procedures of RPL with your student counsellor.

In order to receive financial aid for students and to pass the study units of your ISP, you are entitled to know your study attainments and grades within a set timeframe.

**CURRICULUM & ISP:** The curriculum explains what kind of competences your degree requires, what the degree consists of and how you should grow professionally. Planning, implementation and continual development of education takes place in cooperation with students, working life partners and other stakeholders.

At the beginning of your studies you design an individual study plan (ISP) on the basis of the curriculum. The ISP is updated as the studies progress.



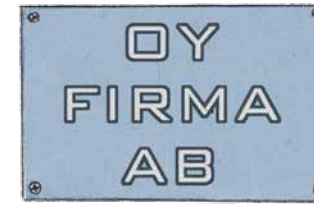
Karelia UAS offers both daytime and multi-modal studies. Both modes use information and communications technology (ICT) for e-learning. The majority of study materials are available in the Karelia UAS Moodle learning environment.

You can also use the Karelia UAS email system and other information sources that support your learning. Moreover, while studying, you have a chance to acquire software at a lower price.

*E-learning: The autumn brings along virtual studies. Many electronic learning environments and information systems become familiar and prove to be handy.*

*COUNSELLING: The best part is of course studying. In my studies I basically follow the ready-made schedules. If the semester is less crowded, I'll take a few complementary studies. If I don't have a summer job, I will do summer studies and expedite my studies and graduation. . Luckily Pakki includes loads of information. I might also ask my peer tutors and my teacher tutor for advice.*

You are entitled to student counselling throughout your studies. Counselling begins already before you enter Karelia UAS and continues all the way to the end of your studies in the form of career counselling. Guidance and instructions are given by student counsellors, student welfare officer, teacher and peer tutors, VIP students and every teacher for their part.

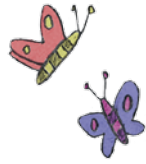


*PRACTICAL TRAINING: At the turn of the year I'll start looking for my first placement. Smaller assignments can also be put together and extended over a longer time span. The main thing is to have enough practice. It's great that our teachers seem to have good contacts with local companies.*



Practical training is part of your UAS studies. It requires that you sign a training agreement, make a plan for the training period and report your placement after you have completed it. Supervision and guidance are available from both Karelia UAS and your training place. Training helps you to create contacts with working life and can give you a chance to find a topic for your thesis and even give you a chance to work during or after your studies.





*THESIS: Rampe, who lives next door, has already started writing his thesis. It's interesting to follow his work and start thinking about my own thesis – I don't want to leave it to the last minute. Rampe didn't have any problems to get started – his teacher had a folder full of suggestions, but I think he had discovered a topic already while he was doing his practical training. It seems to take quite a while to write and zoom in, but luckily help is available. I must admit that I have got lots of peer support so far.*

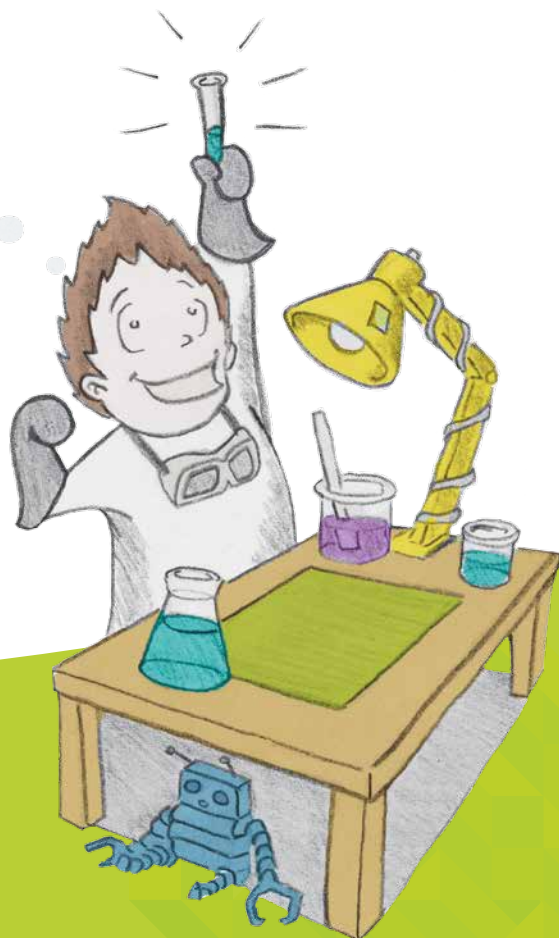
Thesis is part of every UAS degree. The thesis process is managed in cooperation with the student, the commissioning party and the supervising teacher. The thesis requirements are set by the Polytechnic Decree. Thesis instructions can be found in the Pakki student portal.

Internationalisation is also included in your studies. Karelia UAS offers studies in foreign languages and part of your degree can be taken in European partner universities. You can also become familiar with international activities and multiculturalism by working as an international peer tutor. More information is available from your international coordinator. You may receive scholarships and funding for your studies abroad.

*INTERNATIONALITY: Although I'm a guy from nowhere, I've become quite international already because at Karelia UAS you can meet a lot of international people. Apart from the usual schoolwork, you can focus on something that I consider even more essential, i.e. creating multicultural networks and international relationships.*



*RDI: All sorts of projects are nice. They have helped me to create connections with companies and development projects. They may also help me to find a job. The RDI projects at Karelia UAS are a great way to learn and develop.*



*POKA: And then there was POKA. It's kind of a student club and actually a statutory association as well. POKA has connections to the Karelia UAS management and the surrounding society. Actually, I felt quite honoured to become a member.*

Different Karelia UAS services support your progress towards your degree. The student union POKA sees to your interests and organises various leisure activities. The student unions of the UAS and the University of Eastern Finland organize Sykettä Su-sirajalla [SYKE] physical exercise activities together. The City of Joensuu offers also many sports and cultural events and services. Moreover, different congregations and associations provide support services and opportunities for your spare time.

RDI, i.e. research, development and innovation, and your studies can be combined in various collaborative projects. The RDI initiatives derive from the needs of companies and working life as well as from the Karelia UAS focus areas. As a student, you can take part in RDI on various courses as well as through practical training or thesis. Furthermore, you can participate in the RDI projects of other campuses and thus, gain experience in multi-field cooperation.

*GRADUATION: The thesis took a surprisingly long time, but finally it's all over. I've even got a couple of scholarships; I wouldn't have imagined that at the outset. I've also had lots of fun memories and will surely miss many things. At the end, I'll have a chance to give some feedback again and recall the past years. You, too, whenever possible, do give feedback. It's always worth the while. You might even initiate some major changes.*

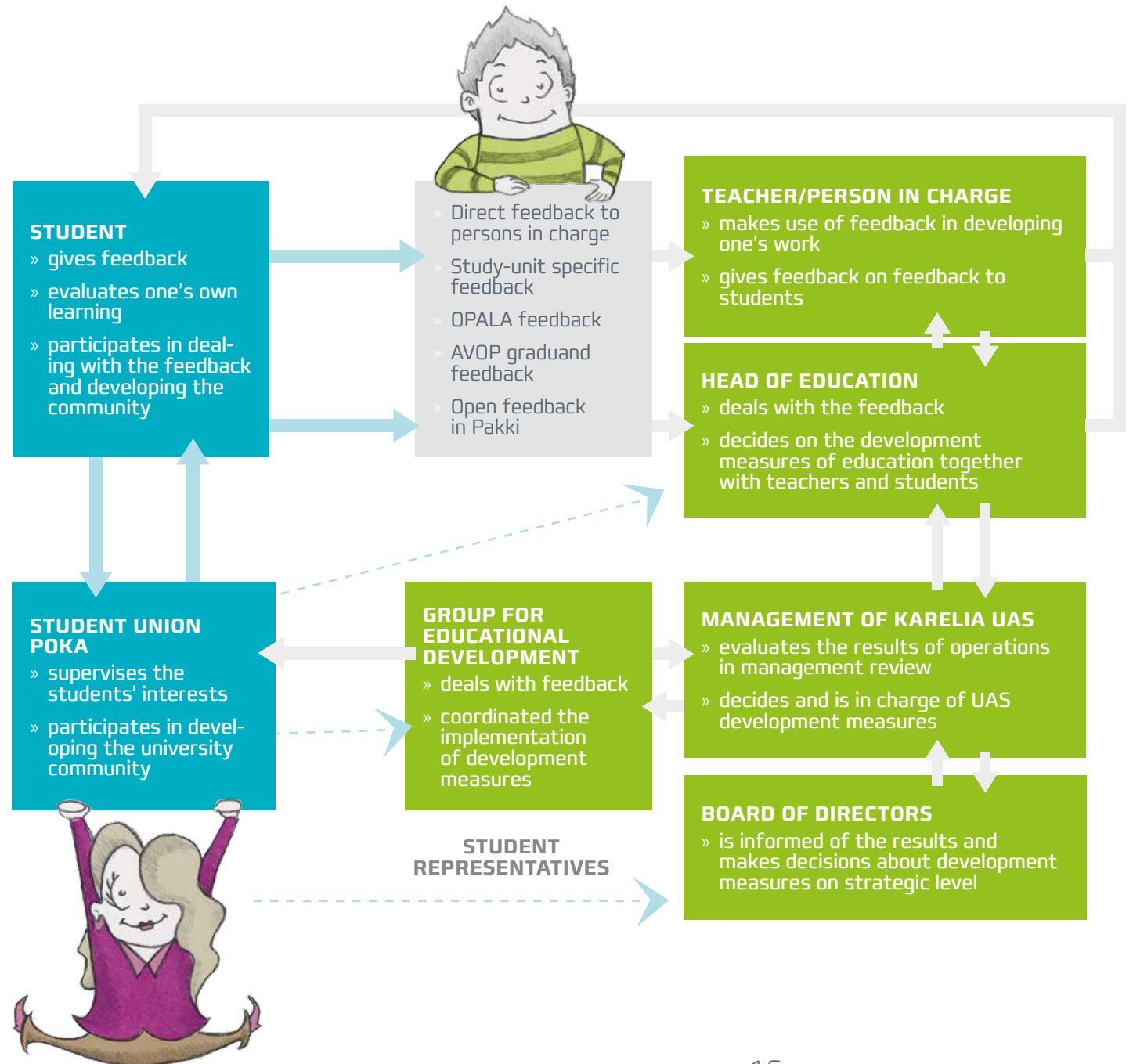
## IMPACTING THROUGH FEEDBACK

As a student you are responsible for your own learning and completing your study assignments, giving and receiving constructive feedback and taking part in the development of the Karelia UAS learning community.

You can give feedback in different ways:

- » in annual development discussions (i.e. student appraisals) you can give feedback directly to your teacher tutor,
- » any person in charge of a specific area or activity can be given immediate feedback, after completing a study unit, you can comment on the positive experiences and initiate development measures to the teacher in charge of the course,
- » every year in January-February you can assess the Karelia UAS performance and your own learning in the OPALA study year feedback and at graduation phase in the nationwide AVOP survey
- » the Pakki portal offers you an opportunity to give direct, open-ended feedback at any time.

The starting point in giving feedback and developing Karelia UAS activities is the principle of subsidiarity, which means that matters ought to be handled by the



closest or least centralized competent authority. Teachers in charge of study units or other responsible persons take care and develop their own areas of responsibility. Heads of Education assume responsibility for curricula and their implementation. The Group for Educational Development coordinates the development measures pertaining to the whole Karelia UAS.

The accumulated feedback will be put together in March every year. Afterwards the results of the sum-up are analysed and discussed together with the ones who had given the feedback, and decisions regarding the further development measures are made. All feedback is interpreted in the management reviews in April.

The development measures of the UAS and those pertaining to education are recorded in the Karelia/TASO Performance Agreement. The implementation of development measures is coordinated within the whole Karelia UAS by the Group for Educational Development. The Heads of Education are responsible for the implementation of the development measures. Regarding the studies leading to Master's degrees (YAMK), the body responsible for development measures is the YAMK steering group.

As a student you are an important agent and co-developer of the Karelia UAS community. By giving feedback and by participating in the feedback processes and in the community development, you also support the Karelia UAS quality management. The student union POKA promotes the interests of Karelia UAS students and nominates representatives to the decision-making bodies and working groups. You can take part in the decision-making and development in the Board of Karelia UAS limited company, Student Financial Aid Board, Group for Educational Development and in the meetings of education fields.

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## COMBINING STUDIES AND WORKING LIFE

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Graduation entails that you have met the competence requirements of the curriculum, completed all the studies and fulfilled all other obligations regarding to your degree programme. As a student you yourself must officially apply for graduation. Degrees are awarded monthly, except in July. Added to your degree certificate you will receive an appendix called Diploma Supplement. The aim of the supplement is to improve the international recognition and transparency of your degree.

When doing your practical training you will gain valuable work experience and improve your skills to apply theoretical knowledge into the practice of your future profession. During the training placement you can also build personal relationships and contacts to the employers, other interest groups and development organisations of your professional field and region. Furthermore, practical training is important for your future employment and career opportunities and for your professional networks.

You yourself need to be active in order to find an interesting and suitable place for practical training. Moreover, the contacts of your teachers and other members of the staff can be of help. In order to find a job after graduation, it is important that you have theoretical knowledge (your studies), as well as work experience and connections which you have gained during your training placement. Additionally, the thesis, which you have completed for a company or other workplace, can open doors to employment. Again, your own initiative and activity is essential for recruitment.





Karelia UAS is actively involved in research, development and innovation. RDI and projects offer you a good possibility to develop your future workplace. They can give you a realistic view on the working life requirements and practice, and a chance to work with experts in different fields. You can make your own ideas and initiatives to go further - even turning them into a future career.

Alumni are former students of higher education to whom specific alumni activities are targeted. The aim of alumni activities is to maintain the connections between the university and its former students as well as to help graduates to retain their contacts with peers and to establish new relationships.

As an alumnus, you can share your experiences and attainments with new students and also receive stimuli for your own professional development. You can also strengthen your expertise by attending further studies or taking part in development projects. Former students can cooperate with Karelia UAS e.g. by delivering guest lectures, providing training placements, or giving ideas or topics for students' assignments or theses, and by joining RDI projects. Alumni have an important role in building the Karelia UAS partnership network.

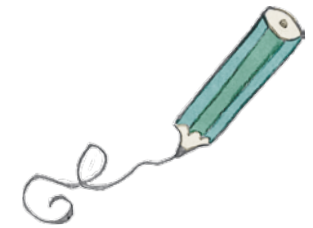




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## KEY CONCEPTS OF QUALITY

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### CUSTOMER/STUDENT

The one who receives, co-develops, uses, orders or pays for a product or service and to whom the product or service brings added value. The key customers of Karelia UAS include students, working life organisations in the region and financiers. The relationship between UAS and students is not a typical client relationship but the students have an important role as a member of the university community.

### CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction is one of the most important indicators of service quality. Satisfaction derives from the experience when the service and its objectives are planned together with the client, when the plan is adhered to, when measures are clearly explained, and when consistent actions are taken and the client respected.

### AUDITING

Auditing is independent external activity, which aims at verifying to what extent the auditee (the audited organisation, unit or activity) fulfils the set quality criteria. The quality management systems of Finnish institutions of higher education have to be submitted to a regular external audit, which aims at investigating whether the system is effective, suitable and compliant with the objectives.

### SELF-EVALUATION

In self-evaluation the institution (auditee) critically assesses its own performance and results.

### THE WHEEL OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

It is a classical model of problem-solving and a cycle of continuous learning, also known as the Deming cycle or the Wheel of Continuous Improvement. The model is based on a repeated cycle of planning, doing, checking and acting or developing (PDCA). It aims at recognising improvement needs and at their continual development.

### MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Management review is a regular assessment procedure, where the Karelia UAS management analyses and assesses the performance and results of the previous years in terms of the set objectives.

### QUALITY

From the perspective of Karelia UAS, quality means purposeful activities in order to meet the objectives of the strategy. From the student and customer perspective, quality implies that education and services provided by the Karelia UAS are compliant with the quality promises, and the expectations and needs of service users.

### QUALITY MANUAL

The Karelia UAS Quality Manual is a document describing the quality management system and measures of quality assurance.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE

At Karelia UAS, quality assurance means those procedures which guarantee and develop the quality of education and other activities of the institution.

### QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (QMS)

The QMS is an entity including the organisation, sharing of responsibilities, procedures, processes and resources of quality management. The Karelia UAS quality management system is based on the wheel of continuous development.

### FEEDBACK

Feedback refers to the information that is given to students on their learning, to teachers on their teaching and to other responsible persons or the whole Karelia UAS on their performance.

### RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

The person or unit who has received feedback replies to it by a response, i.e. by explaining his/her own interpretation of the feedback and telling about the development measures it entails.

### KARELIA/TASO PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

It is a regular and systematic planning process resulting in the Karelia UAS performance agreement. The agreement defines the performance and development objectives of the whole Karelia UAS and its fields of education.

### PROCESS

A series of interrelated and repeated actions, which turn inputs into output (services or products). Process descriptions are verbal and often also graphical accounts of actions meant to systematise, outline, instruct and illustrate operations.

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## QUALITY GROUP

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The tasks of the group include planning and coordinating quality management, developing quality management expertise, planning and implementing external and internal audits, implementing the action plan of quality management, organising the management reviews, and renewing the feedback questionnaires. There is also a student member in the group.

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## KEY PERSONS IN CHARGE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

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