
ENQA AGENCY REVIEW: FINNISH EDUCATION EVALUATION CENTRE (FINEEC)

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13 FEBRUARY 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015 FINEEC – The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre or Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus (Karvi) - asked to be reviewed against the new Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (the ESG) by a panel appointed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The review was for the purpose of determining whether FINEEC would still be compliant with the ESG and thus meet the criteria for reconfirmation of its membership of ENQA, and the requirement for re-registration in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). FINEEC's predecessor, FINHEEC, went through an ENQA organized review against the ESG in 2010.

The review was postponed until 2016 because of the establishment of a new organisation in 2014, FINEEC, which was formed by combining the evaluation activities of FINHEEC, the Finnish Education Evaluation Council and the Finnish National Board of Education.

The main external quality assurance activity of FINEEC in the field of higher education is audits of the institutions' quality systems. FINEEC has conducted quality audits since 2005, and is currently more than halfway through the second round of audits. The concept for the third round of audits, which is to begin in 2017, is in the development phase, and FINEEC has invited the higher education community and other stakeholders to take part in the development. FINEEC has conducted a cross-border audit in 2013 of the University of Graz in Austria. There are no concrete plans to engage in any new cross-border quality assurance activities.

FINEEC also conducts EUR-ACE accreditations of engineering degree programmes. FINEEC passed the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAAE) review in 2014. To date FINEEC has completed four programme accreditations.

FINEEC also conducts thematic analyses and thematic evaluations, which are very valued in the higher education community, but which the panel does not consider as quality assurance in the sense of the ESG. FINEEC has a high level of international engagement in ENQA, as an active partner in EU Twinning projects, and in Nordic cooperation etc.

The panel performed a site visit in September 2016 and found that FINEEC fully complies with the ESG in most areas. The panel found that FINEEC complies substantially with two of the ESG, and partially with only one of the ESG. A table with an overview of the panel's conclusions and recommendations in relation to all standards in the ESG part 2 and 3 is presented on the next page.

The panel hopes that its analyses and recommendations will support FINEEC in its efforts to enhance the quality and raise the impact of its quality assurance activities.

Table 1: Overview of conclusions and recommendations

ESG	Level of compliance	Recommendation(s)
ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE	Substantially compliant	The panel recommends that FINEEC actively supports initiatives that would lead to Finland's adoption of a national qualifications framework as soon as possible as expected in the Bologna Process. The panel also recommends FINEEC to take into account the new ESG when developing the new audit model for the third round, so that a clear link between the audit targets and the ESG part 1 is established.
ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE	Fully compliant	The panel recommends FINEEC to supplement its comprehensive efforts in engaging the broad higher education community in the development of the next audit model with more direct consultations with the main stakeholders at the national level, e.g. the rectors' conferences, the social partners and the Ministry, in order to ensure support and consensus about the model.
ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES	Fully compliant	
ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS	Fully compliant	
ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES	Fully compliant	
ESG 2.6 REPORTING	Fully compliant	
ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS	Fully compliant	
ESG 3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE	Substantially compliant	To increase the relevance of its work also for other actors beyond the HE institutions, the panel recommends FINEEC to consider, how it could strengthen the involvement of social partners in its governing bodies and ensure a transparent and systematic dialogue and coordination with key stakeholders at the national level, especially the most important labour market organisations, and even with the relevant officials in the Ministry of Education and Culture.
ESG 3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS	Fully compliant	
ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE	Fully compliant	
ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS	Partially compliant	The panel recommends FINEEC to quickly initiate and complete the planned thematic analyses and allocate the necessary resources to this activity so that the development of the audit model for the third round can be based on solid knowledge and reflections on the results and experiences from the second round.
ESG 3.5 RESOURCES	Fully compliant	
ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT	Fully compliant	
ESG 3.7 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES	Fully compliant	

INTRODUCTION

This report analyses the compliance of The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre, FINEEC, (Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus, Karvi) with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. It is based on an external review conducted in 12 months from January 2016 until December 2016. The review was commissioned in view of the agency's wish to reconfirm its membership of ENQA and its listing in EQAR.

BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW AND OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

ENQA's regulations require all member agencies to undergo an external cyclical review, at least once every five years, in order to verify that they act in substantial compliance with the ESG as adopted at the Yerevan ministerial conference of the Bologna Process in 2015.

As this is FINEEC's second review, the panel is expected to provide clear evidence of results in all areas and to acknowledge progress from the previous review. The panel has adopted a developmental approach, as the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* aim at constant enhancement of the agencies.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE 2010 REVIEW

In the 2010 review, the panel was satisfied that, in the performance of its functions, FINHEEC was in compliance with the ENQA Membership Provisions. The Panel therefore recommended to the Board of ENQA that FINHEEC should have its Full Membership of ENQA confirmed for a further period of five years.

The review panel found many commendable features in the work of FINHEEC. These included: the professional and committed work of the secretariat; the high quality of audit reports; the open dialogue in feedback to and from institutions; and the readiness of the Evaluation Council to carry out self-critical analysis in the course of its work. The panel had a clear view that FINHEEC was contributing to the development of Finnish higher education and had the full support of the sector, based on an excellent working relationship with its stakeholders.

Although the panel had a positive assessment of the overall picture regarding the satisfaction by FINHEEC of the expectations of the ESG, the panel also found areas that would benefit from FINHEEC's consideration. First, the panel had a significant reservation related to the absence of any explicit reference to the ESG Part 1 guidance for internal quality assurance in institutions in the audit procedures. Second, while recognising the challenges resulted from language issues, the panel also recommended that FINHEEC should find ways of strengthening the level of international participation in its processes. Finally, the panel recommended FINHEEC to allow for a form of representation to the FINHEEC Council, subsequent to the audit report, with reference back to the team, in cases where an institution disputed the Council's decision on procedural grounds.

The panel found that FINHEEC fully complied with all the standards except three, where FINHEEC was found to be in substantial or partial compliance.

REVIEW PROCESS

The 2016 external review of FINEEC was conducted in line with the process described in the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and in accordance with the timeline set out in the Terms of Reference. The panel for the external review of FINEEC was appointed by ENQA and composed of the following four members:

- Tia Loukkola (chair), European University Association (EUA), Belgium (EUA nomination)

- Tue Vinther-Jørgensen (secretary), Ministry of Higher Education and Science, Denmark (ENQA nomination)
- Milan Pol, Dean, Masaryk University, Czech Republic (ENQA nomination)
- Beate Tremml, member of ESU Student Experts' Pool on Quality Assurance and Student at the University of Graz, Austria (ESU nomination).

Maria Kelo from the ENQA Secretariat in Brussels served as coordinator for the review.

FINEEC produced a self-assessment report, which provided a substantial portion of the evidence that the panel used to draw its conclusions. The panel conducted a site visit to validate fully the self-assessment and clarify any points at issue. Finally, the review panel produced the present final report on the basis of the self-assessment report, site visit, and its findings.

Self-assessment report

The review was conducted in good cooperation with FINEEC. The agency provided an informative self-assessment report (SAR), which gave a good understanding of its current quality assurance activities, its role and legal framework etc. as well as explained the merger of the former FINHEEC into the FINEEC and the ongoing process of developing the model for the third round of audits. The report was primarily descriptive, but also contained a SWOT-analysis of the agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The SWOT-analysis was conducted at seminars with the attendance of members of the higher education evaluation committee, the committee for accreditation of engineering degree programmes and employees from FINEEC's unit for higher education. The SAR was delivered on time in May 2016.

Site visit

The review panel paid a site visit to FINEEC in early September 2016. The panel and FINEEC had arranged two full days of interviews on the 6th and 7th of September. Prior to the interviews, the panel had a planning session on the 5th of September. The programme for the site visit was comprehensive, and FINEEC was very cooperative in ensuring that the panel would meet with all the stakeholders that the panel found relevant. The programme of the site visit can be found in Annex 2 to this report

The programme included 12 interviews with:

- Management of FINEEC,
- Employees from FINEEC's Unit for Higher Education,
- Members of the evaluation Council, HE evaluation committee and committee for accreditation of engineering degree programmes,
- Members of audit and accreditation panels,
- Rectors, vice-rectors and representatives of the two Finnish rectors' councils,
- Representatives of the two Finnish students' unions,
- Representatives of labour market organisations,
- Officials from the Ministry of Education and Culture,
- Heads of quality assurance management at HE institutions, and
- Academic staff from HE institutions.

The interviews were all conducted in an open and frank atmosphere, and the interviewees provided clear and valuable evidence about FINEEC and its activities to the review panel. Prior to the site visit, FINEEC had fast and willingly provided the panel with supplementary documentation on demand from the panel.

Review report

The review panel held a wrap up session at the end of the site visit outlining its review report on FINEEC. The panel discussed FINEEC's strengths and weaknesses and agreed easily on the agency's degree of compliance with all the standards in part 2 and 3 of the ESG's. A draft of the review report was sent to FINEEC for comments on the 2nd of November 2016, and the present final review report was sent to ENQA on the 30th of November 2016.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF THE AGENCY

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Finland has a dual higher education system and an extensive network of higher education institutions (HE institutions) covering the whole country. Finland is geographically large in relation to its population and offering opportunities for higher education in the whole country has been a part of overall regional policy. Higher education is offered by 14 universities and 24 universities of applied sciences (UASs). Most of the HE institutions operate under the governance and steering of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC). In addition, there is the Åland University of Applied Sciences in the self-governing Province of Åland, the Police College under the steering of the Ministry of Interior, and the National Defence University under the steering of the Ministry of Defence. The universities are prescribed in the Universities Act (558/2009). Most of the universities are public, although two of them are foundation-based. The educational responsibilities of the universities are prescribed by government decree. The UASs have operating licenses awarded by the MoEC. All of the UASs are limited companies.

Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences enjoy rather extensive autonomy. The operations of the HE institutions are built on the principles of freedom of education and research. The HE institutions decide on their internal organisational structure as well as steering, funding and quality systems. Finland does not have a programme accreditation system. However, for opening degree education in a totally new field, universities must make a proposal to the Ministry of Education and Culture. The educational responsibilities of the UASs are prescribed in their operating licences.

Both HE sectors have undergone extensive structural changes in the past years. The number of higher education institutions reporting to the Ministry of Education and Culture has declined between 2009 and 2014 from 48 to 38 through mergers (universities from 20 to 14 and UASs from 28 to 24). In addition to structural changes, in the last ten years both sectors of higher education have undergone several big reforms: they have received new legislation (Universities Act 558/2009, UAS Act 932/2014), and new legal status (universities are no longer state institutions, UASs became limited companies), in addition to undergoing organisational changes (e.g. in management and decision-making systems).

Universities and universities of applied sciences receive most of their funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture and the activities of HE institutions are steered in practice by four-year performance agreements with the Ministry. Each university and university of applied sciences has negotiations with the Ministry in relation to their performance agreement. Operational and qualitative targets for the HE institutions and the resources required are determined in the agreement. The monitoring and evaluation of target attainment as well as the development of operations are also described in the agreement. This process is conducted separately from the external quality assurance processes, and FINEEC is not in any way involved in this process. Both HE sectors have a strongly performance-based funding model, which includes several quantitative indicators relevant to the HE sector. The performance-based funding systems for both sectors have been revised several times.

In addition to state funding, HE institutions receive supplementary funding, e.g. from paid services, donations and sponsors. Competitive research funding is an important source of additional financing especially for the universities. Competitive funding for scientific research is provided and evaluated by the Academy of Finland, which is an agency within the administrative branch of the Ministry.

Finland has not yet adopted a national qualifications framework (NQF). However, the Government Decree on University Degrees (794/2004) and the Polytechnics Decree (1129/2014) define the objectives, extent and overall structure of degrees. In addition, the Universities Act and Polytechnics Act state the aimed duration of the studies for each degree type. HE institutions decide on the detailed contents and structure of the degrees they award. They also decide on their curricula and forms of instruction. Some fields have detailed regulations for the structure and/or content of the degrees awarded. For instance, medical education also has to comply with the European Union's regulations and teacher education is required to contain a certain amount of pedagogical studies.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The history of external quality assurance of higher education in Finland is in practice identical with the history of FINEEC. FINEEC's history and current quality assurance activities are described below.

FINEEC

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) was established on the 1st of May 2014 by merging three previous organisations, namely the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC), the Finnish Education Evaluation Council and the National Board of Education's Unit for Evaluation of Learning Outcomes. FINEEC is the single body responsible for evaluation of all educational sectors, from early childhood to higher education, as well as vocational and adult education in Finland. FINEEC's predecessor in higher education, FINHEEC, operated from January 1st 1996 until April 31st 2014. All its activities and personnel were included in the merging process. See table 2 below for an overview of types of evaluations by FINEEC and former FINHEEC.

Table 2: Overview of types of evaluations

Evaluation type	Duration
Evaluations for granting UAS operating licenses	1995–1999
Thematic evaluations	1997-
Accreditation of professional courses	1999–2007
Institutional evaluations of institutions	1992–2004
Centres of Excellence evaluations	1996–2012
1st round of audits of quality systems	2005–2011
2nd round of audits of quality systems	2012–2018
Accreditations of engineering degree programmes	2014-
3rd round of audits of quality systems	2017-

FINHEEC was founded when the decree (1320/1995) for the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council became effective on January 1st 1996. Its tasks and goals remained largely unchanged throughout the lifespan of the organisation for nearly two decades. The logic was to separate evaluation of higher education from the Ministry to ensure independent evaluation.

Initially, the first objective of FINHEEC was defined as the development of evaluation procedures in the HEIs nationwide. FINHEEC assisted in institutional evaluations by training experts, providing

consultancy services for the institutions, building a database of information about Finnish and foreign evaluation practices, developing evaluation methodologies, promoting research of evaluation, intensifying international co-operation and publishing related literature.

The second important objective was to commence systematic evaluations. In the university sector, FINHEEC's role was to conduct institutional evaluations of operations, where the university could choose a relevant field as the focus of the evaluation. 13 out of 20 Finnish universities decided to take part in the exercise. The first round of audits of quality assurance systems of Finnish HEIs began in 2005 and was completed in 2011. The second round of audits began immediately afterwards and was continued by the Higher Education Evaluation Unit under FINEEC. The current cycle will be finished by the end of 2018.

The third main objective of FINHEEC was to carry out evaluations for granting UAS operating licenses. The ultimate power of decision was to remain, however, with the Government. FINHEEC established an accreditation sub-committee consisting of representatives of teachers, students and the world of work outside the higher education institutions. In 1995–1999 the accreditation and extension of the universities of applied sciences were evaluated. The Operating Licenses Subcommittee members evaluated each temporary university of applied sciences applying for accreditation, including HE institutions, which had applied to be extended by the incorporation of a new educational establishment.

During the years 1996–2012, FINHEEC also carried out the selection and evaluation procedure of centres of excellence in university education and universities of applied sciences at the request of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

FINEEC'S ORGANISATION/STRUCTURE

FINEEC is governed by the **Evaluation Council**. The Evaluation Council is the strategic decision-making body of the Centre. The Government Decree (1317/2013) on the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre dictates the composition, tasks and decision-making powers of the Council. The tasks of the Council are the following:

1. To take part in strategic planning of the Centre's activities;
2. To decide on important statements and proposals with far-reaching implications;
3. To prepare a proposal for the National Education Evaluation Plan and changes to it;
4. To prepare a proposal for the Ministry of Education and Culture on Boards under the Council.

The Director must hear the Council before deciding on project plans for evaluations and compositions of planning and evaluation groups for all education sectors apart from higher education.

The Council members are appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Council has 13 members with representatives from different educational sectors, teacher education, research, working life and students. The Council selects the Chair and Vice-Chair from among its members.

The decision-making power in relation to higher education lies primarily with the **Higher Education Evaluation Committee**. According to the Government decree, the Council proposes members for the Committee and the Ministry of Education and Culture appoints them. The Council makes its selection from the candidates put forward by the higher education institutions and other stakeholders. The Higher Education Evaluation Committee consists of nine members of which three must also be members of the Council. The members must be experts in evaluation of higher education. The Evaluation Committee also selects the Chair and Vice-Chair from among its membership. The Evaluation Committee reports to the Education Evaluation Council and decides on:

1. Project plans and compositions of planning and evaluation teams for evaluations of higher education institutions;
2. Outcomes of audits of quality systems of higher education institutions.

A **committee for accreditations of engineering degree programmes** has been appointed by FINEEC with tasks similar to those of the Higher Education Evaluation Committee.

The structure of the organisation is laid out in the Rules of Procedure of FINEEC. The order lays out the tasks, operating principles, leadership structure and general division of labour within the Centre. The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre currently has approximately 40 persons working in three units:

1. The Higher Education Evaluation Unit
2. The General and Vocational Education Evaluation Unit (Helsinki)
3. The General and Vocational Education Evaluation Unit (Jyväskylä).

The heads of units and the Director of the Centre form the Management Team, which has a pivotal role in preparing the annual plan of action and budget for the Centre.

FINEEC launched its first strategy (Foresight and Effective Evaluation 2020) in 2015. The strategy includes FINEEC's vision, mission and operating principles.

FINEEC has recently launched its National Education Evaluation Plan for 2016–2019. The plan outlines all major evaluations that the Centre intends to conduct during the years to come. FINEEC's proposal for the plan was confirmed without major changes by the Ministry of Education and Culture in spring 2016.

FINEEC'S FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES, PROCEDURES

The role of FINEEC is given by law. FINEEC is defined as an independent expert organisation, which operates within the branch of government under the Ministry of Education and Culture. FINEEC's mission is set out in the Act on FINEEC (1295/2013) to:

1. conduct evaluations related to education and teaching and to the providers of education and the activities of higher education institutions in accordance with a national evaluation plan;
2. in accordance with the national evaluation plan undertake:
 - a. evaluations of learning outcomes relating to the distribution of lesson hours and the national core curriculum targets (basic education and general upper secondary Schools Act (629/1998);
 - b. evaluations of learning outcomes relating to targets of the national core curriculum (vocational education and training) and in the national qualification requirements (vocational adult education) and in the national core curriculum (basic education);
3. support providers of education and training and higher education institutions in matters related to evaluation and quality management;
4. develop the evaluation of education; and
5. attend to any other duties that are issued or given to the Evaluation Centre.

FINEEC conducts evaluations at all levels of education in Finland. In the field of higher education, the main quality assurance activity is institutional audits of quality systems at the HE institutions. FINEEC also conducts accreditations of engineering programmes. Both types of activities falling under the scope of the ESG are described in further detail below.

In addition to these two types of quality assurance activities, FINEEC conducts thematic evaluations within and across the different educational levels in the Finnish educational system. The topics of these evaluation projects have ranged from individual subjects such as education for social work to

sector-wide topics, such as the research, development and innovation activities of Finnish universities of applied sciences. The purpose of thematic evaluations is to provide knowledge and information about selected topics to the institutions and the policy makers, the evaluations seek to map and analyse how it is implemented and managed across education sector. The topics are chosen by FINEEC and included in the national evaluation plan. The actual evaluation will always be implemented by a separately appointed evaluation group supported by an evaluation expert working at FINEEC. The evaluation results are published in a report, which can be downloaded from the FINEEC website. However, the evaluation methodology is decided according to the topic and does not follow a predefined template. It is optional for the institutions to contribute to these evaluations, and the outcome does not provide an assessment or conclusion on the effectiveness or fitness for purpose of individual institutions or individual programmes. The review panel therefore has the view that these thematic evaluations do not fall under the remit of the ESG.

FINEEC has embraced the principle of enhancement-led evaluation as an overall guiding principle for its quality assurance activities. In its self-assessment report, FINEEC explains that the goal of enhancement-led evaluation is to help higher education institutions identify the strengths, good practices and areas in need of development in their own operations. The purpose is, thus, to help higher education institutions achieve their strategic objectives and steer future development activities in order to create a framework for the institutions' continuous development.

The enhancement-led principle of external quality assurance in Finland should be seen in context with other steering mechanisms in Finnish higher education. Much more performance-oriented approaches are applied in the direct ministerial regulation of the institutions, e.g. in the performance agreements between each HE institution and the Ministry of Education and Culture, and not least in the performance-based funding model with up to 16 quantitative indicators, including indicators for each institution's number of graduates, students' progression, internationalization, student satisfaction, and employability.

Audits of the quality systems of HE institutions have been implemented in Finland since 2005. The current second audit round will continue until 2018. The audits are compulsory for the HE institutions, but the institutions may choose another agency than FINEEC to do their audits. The objective of the audits is to support Finnish HE institutions in developing quality systems that correspond with the European principles of quality assurance and to demonstrate that functional and consistent quality assurance procedures are in place in Finland both in the institutions and at the national level. In an audit, the quality system of a university or UAS is being reviewed acknowledging that the system has been developed for the institution's own needs and goals. The audits assess how well the quality system meets the strategic and operational needs of the management. It is also assessed how comprehensive and effective the quality management of the basic duties of the HE institutions is. Additional objects of assessment include the HE institution's quality policy, development of the quality system, and how well-functioning and dynamic the system is. In other words, an audit evaluates the effectiveness of the quality system, and does not evaluate the quality of the education or research of the HEI in question. A closer link between the audit and the strategic objectives of each HEI is forged through an optional audit target that is defined by the institution itself. A function chosen as the optional audit target has to be central to the institution's strategy or profile and an area that the institution wants particularly to develop in terms of quality management. The optional audit target is not taken into account when evaluating whether the institution will pass the audit, but it is mentioned in the audit certificate related to the quality label, which is the outcome of the audit process. Passing or not passing the audit has only reputational consequences for the HE institutions and has no impact on recognition of degrees awarded, or even on funding. If an institution does not pass the audit, it has to go through a re-audit. The audit model is described in detail in the publicly available audit manual.

In 2013, FINHEEC conducted a cross-border audit in Austria by evaluating the quality system of the University of Graz (Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz). It is the only audit conducted across borders so far, and FINEEC does not have any concrete plans to take on new cross-border evaluations. The whole audit process in Austria was implemented in accordance with the FINHEEC audit manual. The only two deviations were, 1) that quality management of internationalization was included as an additional audit target (criteria) as required by Austrian law, and 2) the assessment of samples at programme level as prescribed in the audit manual was replaced by thorough interviews of deans, teachers and students at three faculties and the inclusion of all faculties in the audit. The panel therefore does not consider this single cross-border audit to be significantly different from the audits that FINEEC carries out in Finland, and considers thus that its conclusions on ESG compliance for the audits carried out in Finland are valid also for the process carried out abroad.

Engineering degree programme accreditation is a programme specific evaluation leading to the award of the international EUR-ACE Label. It is voluntary for the engineering programmes to go through an accreditation process. The accreditation aims to support the development of quality in engineering degree programmes and increase international comparability and recognition of Finnish engineering degrees in industry. HE institutions may utilise engineering degree programme accreditations to get an external view of how well the students in a programme receive the knowledge and skills required by their respective industries. The accreditation method is based on the European Accredited Engineer (EUR-ACE) standard administered by the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAE). Accredited programmes are granted the EUR-ACE Label, which is valid for six years from the evaluation decision. Accreditations are voluntary for the HE institutions and a fee covering the costs is charged. To be eligible to grant the EUR-ACE Label, an agency must undergo an external evaluation conducted by the ENAE, including two observed accreditation site visits. FINEEC passed this evaluation in summer 2014 and currently has the right to grant the EUR-ACE Bachelor Label to four-year UAS bachelor's degree programmes. FINEEC aims to also attain the right to grant EUR-ACE Master quality labels to master's degree programmes. FINEEC's model for engineering programme accreditations is described in the publicly available Standards and Procedures for Engineering Programme Accreditation.

FINEEC'S FUNDING

The overall budget of the FINEEC in 2016 is approximately 3.8 million euro, and FINEEC is free to decide on its priorities in the budget. The majority of direct expenditures is labour costs. The labour costs of the Higher Education Evaluation Unit will be approximately 970,000 euro in 2016.

FINEEC's activities are primarily funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture with which it has a long term financial agreement. HE institutions must pay for participating in the audits. The price of the audit is determined by a government decree and is also mentioned in the agreement on the audit between FINEEC and the HE institution under review. FINEEC can get additional funding from revenue generating activities. For instance, FINEEC is currently engaged in two EU funded Twinning projects in Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the agency was involved in a third Twinning project in Egypt from 2013 to 2015, too. FINEEC also regularly conducts thematic evaluations on request of and financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Should FINEEC decide to carry out any new crossborder quality assurance projects like the audit in Austria, FINEEC would be obliged to do it on a full-cost basis.

FINDINGS: COMPLIANCE OF FINEEC WITH THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (ESG)

ESG PART 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

ESG 3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY, AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

Evidence

Audits of the quality systems at the HE institutions are the main quality assurance activity of FINEEC, and it has been so for more than a decade. The current second round of audits of quality systems was initiated in 2012 and runs until 2018. With 14 universities and 24 universities of applied sciences (UASs) in Finland, FINEEC conducts approximately 6-7 audits per year on average during the second round.

FINEEC has begun preparing for the third round of audits of quality systems, which is to begin in 2017 overlapping partially with the current second round. The work was launched already in June 2015, when FINEEC arranged a so-called roadshow with six workshops at different geographical locations throughout Finland. Stakeholders from all parts of the educational system were invited to express their wishes to the evaluation plan of the then newly established FINEEC. The dialogue with stakeholders from higher education focused on aims, content and methodology of the third round of audits of quality systems. A working group with representatives from the HE institutions, including a student member, and from a regional authority, and FINEEC has been established with the task of formulating a proposal for the third round. The group presented its proposal in October 2016 with the purpose of further dialogue and discussions with stakeholders in the HE sector.

The accreditations of engineering degree programmes, which is the second type of quality assurance activity in the field of HE within FINEEC, are conducted with less regularity, as they are voluntary and depending on the demand from relevant HE institutions. Since the accreditations were first offered in 2014, five programmes have been reviewed so far. Accreditation of only one programme is scheduled for 2017. FINEEC plans to advertise the possibility of going through an accreditation process more broadly in order to obtain a higher level of activity.

The purpose of FINEEC and its activities is laid down by law. In the act on FINEEC it is stated that FINEEC shall conduct external evaluations of education, and that it in this way shall produce information to serve decision-making in education policy and for the purpose of fostering education. In the decree on FINEEC it is stated that FINEEC shall apply principles of independent and enhancement-led evaluation in its operations. In FINEEC's first strategy from 2015, this purpose has been transformed into a formulation of a vision and a mission of FINEEC. The vision of FINEEC is that Finland develops education based on the versatile and up-to-date evaluation information produced by the FINEEC. The mission is that FINEEC is a nationally significant and internationally desired evaluation partner in the field of education and an inspiring developer that produces evidence-based evaluation information that has an impact on the development of education. The strategy is available at FINEEC's homepage.

FINEEC is governed by an Evaluation Council, which is appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Council has 13 members with representatives from different educational sectors, teacher education, research, working life and students. The Council is currently chaired by a rector from a university of applied science.

FINEEC also has a Higher Education Evaluation Committee, which is responsible for decision making in relation to the audits of quality system. The Evaluation Council proposes members for the Committee, and the Ministry of Education and Culture appoints them. Higher education institutions and other stakeholders nominate candidates to the Committee, and the Evaluation Council makes its selection from the pool of suggested candidates. The Higher Education Evaluation Committee consists of nine members with representatives of management and staffs from HE institutions, labour market organisations and students. A committee for accreditation of engineering degree programmes has also been established with similar tasks and a similar composition.

There are not any international members in any of the governing bodies of FINEEC. The international advisory board of the former FINHEEC was dissolved in the merger, and FINEEC is still considering whether a new international advisory board should be established.

Analysis

The review panel finds that FINEEC conducts an adequate number of quality assurance procedures each year. It is impressive that the audits continued uninterrupted even during the merger of former FINHEEC into the current FINEEC. With the plans to initiate the third round of audits in 2017 while still finishing the second round until 2018, it is beyond dispute that FINEEC undertakes external quality assurance activities on a regular basis.

FINEEC has a very clear mission to conduct enhancement-led quality assurance activities in order to support the HE institutions to develop the quality of their provisions. The interviews during the site visit showed that the enhancement-led approach is deeply embedded in the thinking and practice of FINEEC's management and staff, and there is a remarkable consensus in the Finnish higher education society that FINEEC's role is to serve the institutions. Interviews showed that the mission is well known and is being referred to. The ministry, the institutions, the students or the labour market representatives all expressed support for the enhancement-led approach, and none of the interviewees wished to turn FINEEC's activities in a more control-oriented direction.

The members of FINEEC's governing bodies are all appointed from among representatives of the agency's stakeholders. The panel finds the roadshow in June 2015 prior to the decision of the evaluation plan to be an illustrative example of the will of FINEEC to include the stakeholders in the work and development of the agency. During the site visit, the stakeholders in general expressed great satisfaction with FINEEC's willingness to listen to them, even if concerns were expressed whether the audit model for the third round will take into account the diversity of profiles and thus needs of the HE institutions.

The interviews also showed that FINEEC needs to strengthen its dialogue with the social partners. Social partners are only to a small extent included in the governing bodies. There are no private sector labour market representatives among the members of the Evaluation Council, and only one in the Higher Education Evaluation Committee. Large workshops with hundreds of attendees do not seem sufficient for ensuring a close dialogue with important stakeholders at the national level. A closer dialogue with the social partners might be essential for a continued high level of consensus regarding the activities of FINEEC. There seems to be a similar need for better dialogue and coordination with officials working on higher education in the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The involvement of social partners in the accreditations of engineering degree programmes seems to work satisfactorily.

The panel acknowledges that FINEEC has not yet come to a conclusion on whether a new international advisory board should be established for the merged organisation. It is important to have thorough reflections and consultations about the function and potential value of a new board before a decision is made.

Panel commendations

The panel would like to commend FINEEC for its ongoing effort to involve its stakeholders in its work and development activities.

Panel recommendations

To increase the relevance of its work also for other actors beyond the HE institutions, the panel recommends FINEEC to consider, how it could strengthen the involvement of social partners in its governing bodies and ensure a transparent and systematic dialogue and coordination with key stakeholders at the national level, especially the most important labour market organisations, and even with the relevant officials in the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Panel conclusion: Substantially compliant

ESG 3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS

Standard:

Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.

Evidence

FINEEC is formally recognised as the primary organisation in charge of evaluation of higher education in Finland. Its position and tasks are stipulated in the Act on FINEEC (1295/2013) and the government decree on FINEEC (1375/2013). Together, the act and the decree describe the mandate, mission and operating principles of FINEEC.

Furthermore, the mandate and the status of FINEEC are reflected both in the Universities Act (558/2009), and the Polytechnic Act (932/2014). These two acts do not require that Finnish HEIs take part in FINEEC's evaluations, but the HE institutions are required to take part in external evaluations of their activities, and they strongly point to the direction of FINEEC as the main operator in this regard.

FINEEC also has a legal basis in Austria, where FINEEC is a listed agency allowed to do audits as defined in the Austrian law. FINEEC was active in Austria as the operating agency in the audit of the University of Graz in 2013.

Analysis

The panel finds that the legislation provides a solid foundation for FINEEC's operations in the evaluation of higher education in Finland. FINEEC's position as the primary organisation in charge of evaluation of higher education in Finland was not challenged by any of the interviewees during the site visit.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE

Standard:

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

Evidence

According to the law, FINEEC is an independent expert organisation, which operates within the branch of government under the Ministry of Education and Culture. As earlier mentioned, FINEEC's mandate, mission and operating principles are stipulated in the act and the decree on FINEEC.

The Director of FINEEC is appointed by the government and the members of the Evaluation Council and the Higher Education Evaluation Committee are appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The tasks and powers of the Director, the Evaluation Council and the Higher Education Evaluation Committee are described in the decree.

The tasks of the Evaluation Council are the following:

1. To take part in strategic planning of the Centre's activities;
2. To decide on important statements and proposals with far-reaching implications;
3. To prepare a proposal for the National Education Evaluation Plan and changes to it;
4. To prepare a proposal for the Ministry of Education and Culture on Boards under the Council.

The Director must hear the Council before deciding on project plans for evaluations and compositions of planning and evaluation groups for all education sectors apart from higher education. The ministry must formally approve the National Education Evaluation Plan proposed by FINEEC.

The tasks of the Higher Education Evaluation Committee are the following:

1. To decide on project plans and compositions of planning and evaluation teams for evaluations of higher education institutions;
2. To decide on outcomes of audits of quality systems of higher education institutions.

The committee for accreditations of engineering degree programmes has similar tasks.

FINEEC mentions in the SAR, that a planned future merger with the National Board of Education and the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) in 2016–2017 might imply that the independence of evaluation activities could potentially be compromised, as at least the Board of Education has tasks closely related to the political work of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Analysis

As a government body, FINEEC's tasks, organisational structure and overall operating principles are to a large extent decided upon by law and government decrees.

In terms of organisational independence, the panel identified a potential risk that appointments of the Director and the members of the Evaluation Council may be seen as political, and therefore finds it important, that these appointments are embedded in as transparent procedures as possible with clear and predetermined criteria. In case of the appointment of Director the legislation related to public appointments ensures the transparency, but especially when it comes to the appointment of the Evaluation Council, this could be a point of improvement in a future revision of the government decree on FINEEC.

The process leading to the appointment of the Higher Education Evaluation Committee could serve as a good example for inspiration in this respect. Here, the Evaluation Council proposes members for the committee to the Ministry of Education and Culture based on previous nominations put forward by the higher education institutions and other stakeholders. In the end, the Ministry appoints the members of the committee. The panel finds it positive that this process allows relevant stakeholders to nominate qualified candidates for the committee and at the same time transforms the role of the Ministry into one of making the formal approval, eventually with the possibility to choose among a surplus of nominees in order to balance the overall composition of the group, for instance a satisfactory gender balance, a good representation of working life etc.

The panel finds, however, that what FINEEC might lack in organisational independence, is by large balanced by FINEEC's extensive independence when it comes to defining and implementing its operations and procedures, and deciding on the outcomes of its quality assurance processes.

The site visit clearly proved that FINEEC in practice has very wide margins within which the agency is free to define its activities. For instance, FINEEC is fully in charge of the development of the content and methodology of the third round of quality audits, as it was also the case in the two first rounds of audits. The panel considers it important in this respect that neither the Minister nor the Ministry have the power to instruct FINEEC how to translate the principles defined in the regulations in practice in its quality assurance activities or to interfere with the decision-making of FINEEC.

The interviews during the site visit also showed that the Ministry approved the 2016-2019 national evaluation plan without any major changes in spring 2016. The Ministry in other words respects an arms-length-principle in the formal approval processes. In this respect, it is worth noting that should the Ministry want FINEEC to undertake a specific evaluation not included in the evaluation plan, FINEEC can choose to do so as commissioned work, and the Ministry needs to provide additional resources for the task.

Similarly, in the interview with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture, it was clear that the main interest of the Ministry was that FINEEC supports the HE institutions to take charge of their responsibility for the quality of their provisions. The Ministry is not in any way involved in the daily activities of FINEEC, and is only informed about the outcomes of quality assurance activities when the final report is being published.

Finally, it was absolutely clear from the interviews that the Evaluation Council and both Committees made their decisions without any interference from third parties – Ministry nor HE institutions – and that the same is the case for the audit panels responsible for auditing the quality systems of individual HE institutions.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Standard: Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

Evidence

FINEEC distinguishes between thematic analyses and thematic evaluations.

The former FINEEC had a strong tradition for initiating and publishing thematic analyses of the practices and results of its quality assurance activities. For example, FINEEC conducted a number of

thematic analyses of the results of audits of quality assurance systems and also initiated and funded external studies of the impact of audits conducted in the first round before designing the audit model for the second round.

There have not been any new thematic analyses or studies since the establishment of FINEEC in 2014. However, FINEEC plans to initiate thematic analyses of all the audit targets (criteria) in the audit model for the second round, for instance of how quality assurance of research is done in practice. The analyses will be published as articles, and there will possibly also be a synthesis article based on the series of articles. This work is meant to support the development of the model for the third round of audits, which is scheduled to begin in 2017.

FINEEC plans to create a digital and interactive platform for the third round of audits, with self-evaluation forms for the institutions under review, a working environment for the experts, and with the possibility for FINEEC and the general public to easily extract knowledge and make thematic analyses on the basis of the electronic audit reports available on the platform.

FINEEC has not yet initiated thematic analyses of the accreditations of engineering degree programmes.

The former FINHEEC also initiated and funded other types of studies, e.g. on the quality management of social interaction, centres of excellence in university education and a review of the activities of the FINHEEC council. In its national plan for education evaluation 2016-2019, FINEEC plans to initiate a number of thematic evaluations involving higher education. The evaluations may be subject specific (for instance medical education), sector wide or even cross-level sectoral studies of specific themes or groups of programmes. They are not necessarily based on existing knowledge gathered through FINEEC's external quality assurance activities, but involve other types of sources and the gathering of new data. At the site visit two new thematic evaluations were mentioned as the next to be initiated: How the institutions work with the third mission (entrepreneurship and innovative capacity) and the changing role of school teachers and teacher education's capacity to respond to that.

Analysis

The panel finds it unsatisfactory, though understandable, that the thematic analyses and the thematic evaluations have been at a pause since the merger of FINHEEC into FINEEC.

A number of the above mentioned thematic analyses have been published since the last external review of FINHEEC, so the agency has definitely done a serious effort and put significant resources into describing and analysing the results of its quality assurance activities. The panel took note of how management and employees as well as stakeholders stressed the analyses as very valuable in the development of the current audit model.

FINEEC is currently in a very critical phase where the model for the third round of audits is being developed, and it is important that the development work can be informed by thorough analyses of the results of the current round – as it was the case in the transition from the first to the second round of audits. It is a challenge in this respect that when preparing for the third round of audits and presenting the proposal for the model in autumn 2016, FINEEC had only limited data from thematic analyses. Although FINEEC planned to initiate a number of thematic analyses shortly after the site visit, the panel finds it less than optimal that thematic analyses were not initiated earlier on the basis of the data available at the time in order to support the development of the new audit model.

The panel finds it reasonable that FINEEC has not yet initiated thematic analyses of the accreditations of engineering degree programmes because of the small number of finished accreditations.

The panel also wants to encourage FINEEC to continue doing thematic evaluations and using the benefits of the new organisation with the possibilities of focusing on transitional issues between the different levels in the educational system. In the interviews, HE institutions and other stakeholders commended the agency for its earlier efforts in making thematic evaluation reports as they see these as very informative and valuable in the continuous development of the quality of education and found it important to continue these evaluations. Especially the sharing of examples of good practices and the reports' general analyses of weaknesses and potentials for further development were emphasized as valuable.

During the site visit, time and resources spent on the merger and a particularly busy period with a high number of audits were given as two important reasons for the pause in both thematic analyses and thematic evaluations. The panel supports the decision to prioritize that the work with audits could continue undisrupted in the merger phase, but also sees the need to allocate resources to these activities anew.

Panel recommendations

The panel recommends FINEEC to quickly initiate and complete the planned thematic analyses and allocate the necessary resources to this activity so that the development of the audit model for the third round can be based on solid knowledge and reflections on the results and experiences from the second round.

Panel conclusion: Partially compliant

ESG 3.5 RESOURCES

Standard:

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

Evidence

FINEEC's activities are primarily funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The overall budget of the Centre in 2016 is approximately 3.8 million euros. The majority of direct expenditures is on labour costs. The labour costs of the Higher Education Evaluation Unit will be approximately 970,000 euros in 2016. The Unit comprises the Head of Unit, four Counsellors of Evaluation, eight Senior Advisors, two Evaluation Experts and an Assistant. All Counsellors and Senior Advisors hold Master's degrees, and four employees of the unit currently hold a PhD.

FINEEC has modern and well equipped office facilities in the centre of Helsinki with possibilities for video meetings etc.

Analysis

The panel finds that FINEEC has adequate and appropriate resources to undertake its quality assurance activities within higher education in an effective and efficient manner. The whole organisation, however, has been challenged the last two years by the extra workload caused by the merger at the same time as the Higher Education Unit has carried out the audits as scheduled. The panel considers this period of time as extraordinary period that does not impact the required level of resources in the long term. This was also confirmed both by the management of FINEEC and by the staff at the interviews during the site visit. The interviews also showed that FINEEC gives its

employees good possibilities for competence development, participation in national and international conferences and engagement in international cooperation etc. and has sufficient resources for this. The panel considers the long term financial agreement between FINEEC and the Ministry of Education and Culture to be a great advantage, as it minimizes financial uncertainty and guaranties predictability about staff etc.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Standard:

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

Evidence

FINEEC is as a new organisation still building up its common internal quality assurance system for the entire organisation. This new system will use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) quality model as a foundation, and the development work is expected to be finished by the end of 2016. Once completed, a new Quality Manual for FINEEC will be published online in Finnish, Swedish and English.

Until the new quality system is established, the internal quality assurance (IQA) of the Higher Education Evaluation Unit is still almost identical to the procedures of FINHEEC. FIN(H)EEC has been collecting feedback systematically from all of its evaluations since 2006. Feedback has been gathered from both the higher education institutions that have taken part in the evaluations and the evaluation team members. The feedback has been gathered using online survey tools. FINEEC stresses that the purpose of gathering feedback has been twofold: First, to gather information for the development of FINEEC's activities, and secondly, to monitor the quality of evaluation projects to maintain a good level of customer satisfaction. The questionnaire form has only seen modest changes over the years to better guide the questions to areas of improvement but at the same time to maintain comparability of evaluations during the long audit rounds. Most of the feedback is related to audit projects. Similar forms are used for the accreditations of engineering degree programmes. The survey forms include both open questions and multiple-choice questions where the respondents choose whether they fully agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or fully disagree with a statement.

In 2015 the response rate from the HE institutions was 100% and 89% from the audit team members. The HE institutions and the audit teams generally express a high level of satisfaction with FINEEC's activities. The institutions are especially satisfied that FINEEC treats them equally in its evaluations, and that the chairs of the audit teams perform in a professional manner. The audit team members are especially satisfied that project managers of the audit team act in a professional manner, and that the audit panels produce good reports.

The staff of the Higher Education Evaluation Unit analyses the feedback information usually in a full-day-session once or twice a year, depending on the number of evaluations that year. More serious development issues are normally discussed in separate working groups and more drastic changes are only made when updating the audit model from one round to the next. The overall picture of the feedback and the improvements decided upon are then communicated back to the HE institutions involved and the evaluation team members in the form of a Development Report, which is also available on FINEEC's website.

FINEEC has developed a new procedure for the internal quality assurance of audit reports. The team leader of the Team of Audits reads and gives feedback on all audit reports in order to ensure a common standard of language and consistent judgements. The Director of FINEEC also reads all reports and comments in the case of unprecise passages or a need for more comprehensive arguments.

FINEEC has a non-conflict of interest policy, which is common to all the Finnish civil service, whereby no person with a personal interest in the matter can have any role in the conduct of its evaluation or making decisions on it. FINEEC makes its own research on potential conflicts of interest and also asks both the individual panel member, and the institution under review to confirm that there are no conflicts of interest. The training of the experts supports them in acting in a professional and ethical manner in their contact with the institutions under review.

As Finnish Government officials, FINEEC's employees are bound by the Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014). The Act states, among other things, that it is the duty of authorities to promote equality and non-discrimination in all their activities. A more specific non-discrimination plan is being written for FINEEC. The HE Evaluation Unit maintains a gender balance of at least 2:3 in all its evaluation teams, but in recent years the balance has been very close to 1:1. The engineering degree programme accreditations challenge the balance a bit.

FINEEC has not used subcontractors in higher education quality assurance processes.

Analysis

The review panel is convinced that the solid internal quality assurance work of FINEEC has been well transformed to and continued by FINEEC in all of its HE quality assurance activities. The site visit gave strong evidence that management and employees of FINEEC take the work very seriously both within the unit of higher education and across the units. FINEEC has a sound and self-critical approach to its activities and displays in its annual development reports a strong will to enhance its processes and procedures.

The meetings with institutions and panel members during the site visit showed, that FINEEC is very well respected for its professional conduct during its external quality assurance processes. The panel finds that the practice-oriented training of panel members with cases and dilemmas gives the panel members a good comprehension of their role and the ethics of an external quality assurance process. The high level of experience of both employees and panel members also contributes to the professionalism of FINEEC's work.

While there are no concrete plans to carry out more external quality assurance projects abroad, the interviews with FINEEC's leadership and staff clearly showed the conviction that, should they work abroad again, they would focus on carrying out similar procedures with the same standard of work as the agency does in Finland.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 3.7 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES

Standard:

Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

Evidence

FINEEC has taken part in external reviews once every five years. The last external review was conducted in 2010. The current review was postponed due to the merger process of FINHEEC into FINEEC and partly also due to the revised ESG adopted in May 2015.

Regarding the engineering programme accreditations, FINEEC takes part in an additional external review conducted by the ENAEE every five years. The next ENAEE review will take place in autumn 2018.

Analysis

The review panel experienced a very high commitment by FINEEC to follow the ESG's and to undergo an external review at least once every five years. The panel fully understands that the merger created a necessity for postponing the review, and the panel takes note that the postponement was decided in agreement with ENQA and EQAR.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG PART 2: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

2010 review recommendation

The panel [...] recommends that as it carries out its review of the audit method in preparation for the forthcoming 'second round' of audits (from 2012), FINHEEC make explicit reference within its audit criteria to the ESG on the expected components of internal quality assurance, and their evaluation, as laid down Part 1 and Part 2 of the ESG.

Evidence

FINEEC's audits focus on the quality system that HEIs develop for themselves based on their own needs and goals. The audits examine the effectiveness of the procedures that the institution uses to maintain and develop the quality of its operations. The Finnish audit model, based on institutional reviews, covers all functions of a HE institution, e.g. education, research, development and innovation as well as artistic activities, and societal interaction etc.

The audit model is described in detail in the audit manual. There are six audit targets (criteria) in the current model for the second round of audits. The audit targets include:

1. Quality policy
2. The quality system's link with strategic management
3. Development of the quality system
4. Quality management of the higher education institution's core duties, including essential services supporting these
 - a. Degree education (including first-, second- and third-cycle education)
 - b. Research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities
 - c. The societal impact and regional development work (incl. social responsibility, continuing education, open university and open university of applied sciences education, as well as paid-services education)
 - d. Optional audit target
5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes
6. The quality system as a whole.

As a follow-up on the recommendation in the 2010-review of FINHEEC, samples of degree programmes were introduced as a means to investigate in greater detail, how effectively the quality system was implemented at individual programmes, some of which are selected by the institution, some by the audit team. The introduction of samples also made the link between the Finnish audit model and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) part 1 about the institutions internal quality assurance more directly visible. The audit manual refers directly to the ESG, and state that the objective of the audits has been to support Finnish HE institutions in developing quality systems that correspond to the European principles of quality assurance.

In its self-assessment report, FINEEC illustrates the correspondence between the audit model and ESG part 1 in a detailed table. This table can be found in annex 6 to this report.

FINEEC has also accounted for the correspondence between the model for accreditation of engineering degree programmes and the ESG part 1. The new ESG 2015 have been taken into account in the design of the method. The correspondence is illustrated in a table in the SAR. The table is also annexed to this report (see annex 7).

Analysis

The review panel finds that FINEEC in its quality audits addresses to a very large extent the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG. During the site visit it became very obvious that FINEEC not only in writing but also in practice is very committed to reach a high level of correspondence between its audit model and the ESG. Therefore, the former FINHEEC did a large effort to ensure that the ESG were clearly reflected in the audit model for the second round of audits from 2012. To obtain that objective, FINHEEC introduced samples of degree programmes as a new methodological element in the audit procedure in order to be able to examine more closely how the institutions work with the ESG part 1.

The ESG have been changed since the current audit model was launched in 2012. The link between some of the new elements in the ESG 2015 and the audit model is not so strong, although FINEEC in the two tables in the SAR is able to demonstrate, that the new areas of interest are also touched upon in practice in the current audit model. For instance, this is the case for the ESG 1.3 about student centred learning, teaching and assessment. However, not only FINEEC staff, but also HE institution representatives, and experts could confirm, that these issues are actually touched upon in the audits in audit target 4a about quality management of degree education and audit target 5, which is the samples of degree education, where FINEEC analyses in detail the provisions of three programmes offered by the institution under review.

Another challenge is related to the fact, that Finland has not yet adopted a national qualifications framework (NQF), although a draft national framework has been developed. Therefore, FINEEC would not be able to formally evaluate to what extent the institutions clearly refer to the correct level of the NQF when designing and approving new programmes (ESG 1.2).

The second round of audit continues until 2018, and it is not possible to change the model during the round because of the high commitment to treating the institutions equally. The panel understands this argument and feels very assured after the site visit that FINEEC will ensure the integration of the ESG 2015 into the audit model for the third round, which is to begin in 2017. The panel had the impression that the commitment of FINEEC to the ESG was so high, that it might even risk to reduce the focus on how the new audit model best could serve the needs of the institutions and the HE community as a whole in the Finnish context. The panel believes that both objectives can

be reached at the same time, and that it is pivotal that the development of the next audit model responds to the needs of the institutions in order to stay important and relevant.

The panel also finds a high degree of correspondence between the criteria of accreditation of engineering degree programmes and the ESG part 1. The effectiveness of the institutions' internal quality assurance is addressed even more clearly here. The panel finds it natural and unproblematic that the internal quality assurance procedures are considered at a more general level in an institutional audit than it is possible to do in a programme review.

Panel recommendations

The panel recommends that FINEEC actively supports initiatives that would lead to Finland's adoption of a national qualifications framework as soon as possible as expected in the Bologna Process.

The panel also recommends FINEEC to take into account the new ESG when developing the new audit model for the third round, so that a clear link between the audit targets and the ESG part 1 is established.

Panel conclusion: Substantially compliant

ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE

Standard:

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

Evidence

FINEEC's audits of quality systems are based on the principle of enhancement-led evaluation. The audit model was originally developed in a direct response to the Berlin Communiqué of the Ministerial Conference of the Bologna Process in 2003. A national committee on quality assurance proposed that the objectives set out in the communiqué should be met by requesting that HE institutions develop internal quality assurance systems covering all their operations, and that these should regularly be evaluated by FINHEEC in audits. The goal of the audits would be to help HE institutions to recognise the strengths, good practices and areas in need of development in their operations. Through the audit process, the institutions were to be supported in their efforts to reach their strategic objectives and in directing future development activities in order to create a framework for the institutions' continuous development. This led to the first audit manual, which was published in 2005.

The enhancement-led approach was maintained in the development of the current audit model for the second round. Like the first model, the model for the second round of audits was developed in a process involving HE institutions and other stakeholders. A planning group was established with representatives from universities, universities of applied sciences, working life and students. The group could base its work on a self-evaluation with a SWOT-analysis by the FINHEEC Council, analyses of feedback gathered from the HEIs and audit teams during the first audit round and thematic analyses of the results also from the first round of audits. The planning group arranged a national seminar to discuss the needs and aspirations in the field of higher education. The seminar gathered 200 participants from HEIs and other stakeholders. The external review of FINHEEC conducted in 2010 also had an impact on the new audit model.

The new Audit Manual was published at the beginning of 2011, and the second audit round was launched in an extensive, national seminar in March 2011. In December 2014, the FINHEEC Audit Manual applied in the second audit round was updated to correspond to the administrative model of the then newly established FINEEC. At the same time, FINEEC tried to improve the transparency and clarity of the criteria used based on feedback obtained from HEIs and auditors during the second audit round. The refinement of the audit criteria was done by an international expert team in collaboration with FINEEC staff.

The audit model for the third round is now being developed. Like in the first and second round, the development process involves seminars with representatives from HE institutions and other stakeholders. In June 2015 FINEEC arranged a so-called roadshow with large workshops in six different places in Finland to get input to the agency's future evaluation activities. In the field of higher education the workshops focused to a large extent on the model for the third round of audits. FINEEC has established a working group with representatives from HE institutions, including a student member, a regional authority, and FINEEC. The group presented its proposal for the next audit model in October 2016 for further discussions.

The engineering programme accreditation method is FINEEC's implementation of the EUR-ACE framework coordinated by the ENAEE. The preparation of the method included two pilot accreditations, observed by an external evaluation panel assigned by the ENAEE, which evaluated the method to be fit for the purpose set by ENAEE. The design phase was conducted by a planning team, which consisted of representatives of higher education institutions, students, engineering associations and working life. In addition, FINHEEC organised two open seminars in 2011 and 2012 for HEIs that provide engineering education. In this way, the stakeholders were involved in the design, and in defining the aims and objectives of the accreditation method.

Analysis

FINEEC and its predecessor FINHEEC have shown a continuous commitment to involve HE institutions and also other stakeholders in the development and design of the external quality assurance mechanisms of the agency. The review panel has especially focused on the process leading to the audit model for the second round of audits, as this is the model currently used by FINEEC. The enhancement-led principle was very well sustained by the quite comprehensive consultation with and involvement of HE institutions in the development phase. The development work was also supported by systematic analyses of the experiences from the first round of audits. This inclusive and thorough approach has resulted in a quite impressive consensus among all the interviewees, whom the panel met during the site visit, about FINEEC's role and the purpose of the audits.

The interviewees from the HE institutions all agreed that an audit process implies a huge burden of work, but they could also confirm that the audit process supports them in their work and provides valuable inputs for further enhancement. FINEEC's mid-term follow-up seminar for institutions, which have already been through an audit, was emphasized by the institutions as especially valuable in this respect.

The interviewees having experience with accreditation of engineering degree programmes expressed quite identical views.

The panel finds it well documented that the institutions and other stakeholders have played a significant role in defining the content and methodology of the current audit model and the way the accreditation of engineering degree programmes have been implemented. Institutions and other stakeholders have also been involved in continuous improvements of the models and their

methodology. The panel is convinced that the comprehensive involvement of stakeholders was indeed very fit-for-purpose and even absolutely necessary in the development of an enhancement-led evaluation approach.

FINEEC is currently in the phase where the next audit model is being designed and decided upon. FINEEC has again planned a process with significant involvement of HE institutions and other stakeholders. Nevertheless, the panel got the impression from the interviews, that not all the stakeholders felt that they were being listened to, though they might have been heard in the process. The same kind of discontent was not expressed about the process leading to the current audit model.

Panel recommendations

The panel recommends FINEEC to supplement its comprehensive efforts in engaging the broad higher education community in the development of the next audit model with more direct consultations with the main stakeholders at the national level, e.g. the rectors' conferences, the social partners and the Ministry, in order to ensure support and consensus about the model.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES

Standard:

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent
- an external assessment normally including a site visit
- a report resulting from the external assessment
- a consistent follow-up

Evidence

The audit process consists of the following stages, which are described in the audit manual:

1. The HE institution's registration for an audit
2. Agreement negotiation – with decisions on optional audit target, national (Finnish/Swedish) or international/Nordic (English/Swedish) audit team etc.
3. Appointment of the audit team
4. Compilation of audit material by the HE institution – including basic material (also electronic material) and a self-evaluation report drawn up by the institution in line with the requests in the audit manual.
5. Auditor training
6. Briefing and discussion event - the chair of the audit team and FINEEC's project manager visit the HE institution to be audited around four weeks prior to the audit visit.
7. Audit team's visit to the HE institution – 3-5 days with the purpose to verify and supplement the observations made of the HE institution's quality system based on the audit material.
8. Audit team's recommendation regarding the audit result
9. The Higher Education Evaluation Committee's decision on the result
10. Publication of the report
11. Concluding seminar –the seminar is usually held within one month of the Evaluation Committee's decision and gives the institution's staff and students the opportunity to openly discuss the audit results and conclusions with representatives of FINEEC and the audit team
12. Feedback to FINEEC – questionnaires to reviewed institutions and audit team members.
13. Follow-up seminar – national follow-up seminars with the purpose of sharing good practices and giving feedback on post-audit development work to HE institutions whose audits have

been performed around three years earlier. HEIs prepare a short report on their post-audit development work for the seminar. Seminars are usually attended by approximately 200 participants.

If a HE institution is required to undergo a re-audit, the targets that are in essential need of development and which will be subject to the re-audit are recorded in the Evaluation Committee's decision. The re-audit is conducted two to three years after the decision on the initial audit. The re-audit procedure is described in the audit manual.

The accreditation process consists of the following ten steps:

1. The HE institutions makes a request for an accreditation of a particular engineering degree programme
2. Agreement between FINEEC and the HE institution
3. FINEEC appoints and trains the accreditation team
4. The HE institution compiles the self-evaluation report using the self-evaluation template and sends other materials (also electronic materials) on request of the accreditation team.
5. The accreditation team visits the HEI – at least two days' visit to verify the information given in the self-evaluation report and to gain more information.
6. The accreditation team prepares the report and the HEI checks the report for factual accuracy
7. The accreditation team gives its recommendation on the result of the accreditation
8. The FINEEC Committee for Engineering Education decides on the result
9. FINEEC publishes the accreditation results and the report
10. The accreditation team and the HE institution give feedback to FINEEC.

The steps are described in a manual entitled Standards and Procedures for Engineering Programme Accreditation. If the programme is accredited with conditions, the programme must fulfil the set conditions within the timeframe that is specified in the decision. Within the specified amount of time, the HE institution must submit an interim report to the FINEEC Committee for Engineering Education on how the programme has fulfilled the requirements. The committee may decide that a site visit is needed to confirm the extent to which the requirements have been fulfilled.

Analysis

The panel finds that the external quality assurance processes of FINEEC are reliable, pre-defined, and published.

The interviews during the site visit gave evidence that FINEEC pays careful attention to treating all institutions equally and thus implements its quality assurance processes consistently. The institutions also expressed the opinion that the audit and accreditation processes were useful and supported them in further enhancing the quality of their provisions.

The material provided by FINEEC and the site visit also made it absolutely clear to the panel, that audit and accreditation processes include the four steps required by the ESG:

- a self-assessment of the institution or programme under review,
- an external assessment by an audit or accreditation team including a site visit,
- a report with the results from the external assessment,
- and a consistent follow-up.

The panel took note that follow-up seminars arranged by FINEEC were referred to in a very positive way by all parties during the site visit. The seminars seem to be a quite effective method to ensure a consistent follow-up on the audits as the institutions are both committed and inspired by the fact

that two institutions are supposed to give each other mutual feedback in these seminars. Participation in the follow-up seminar is an integrated part of an audit.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS

Standard:

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

2010 review recommendation

The panel [...] recommends that FINHEEC give continuing attention to the question of international expert participation in its processes, including consideration of international membership of the Council and the establishment of the proposed international advisory committee.

Evidence

FINEEC always appoints teams of experts to carry out its quality assurance processes with higher education. The audit teams and accreditation teams always include a student member.

In audits of quality systems, The Higher Education Evaluation Committee appoints the audit team and its chair. An audit team usually consists of five to seven members, selected so that they represent the two higher education sectors, students, as well as representatives from working life outside the higher education sector. FINEEC has formulated criteria for the competencies that audit team members and chairs are expected to have.

Institutions may choose either Finnish or an international team to carry out the audit. An international audit team always includes Finnish members, who are acquainted with the domestic higher education system. In most cases, there are three international experts in the team and two Finnish experts.

The team members are expected to participate in the training arranged by FINEEC. A project manager from FINEEC in charge of the audit takes part in the team's activities and acts as an audit expert and as the secretary for the audit team. FINEEC has implemented a mechanism of no-conflict-of-interest, which includes both research by FINEEC, and consultation with the potential team member and the institution under review. FINEEC has also formulated operating principles and ethical guidelines that the audit team members must follow during the audit process.

The basic principles regarding accreditation teams' appointment, operating principles and no-conflict-of-interest are the same as those described above regarding the quality system audits. In engineering programme accreditations, the team comprises at least three members who represent a balance of relevant experience and expertise. At least one member of the accreditation team must be an academic expert, at least one a practising engineering professional and at least one a student.

FINEEC arranges training for accreditation team members and requires that each team member completes the training. The training is to a large extent based on on-line videos followed by a meeting, where the accreditation team members discuss questions that have arisen from the videos, and how to operate as a team in practice. In addition, if the programme to be accredited is from a Finnish institution, the training familiarises international team members with the Finnish higher education system and with engineering education in Finland.

Analysis

The site visit gave clear evidence that FINEEC takes the careful selection of audit and accreditation team members very seriously. FINEEC staff does a lot of research in order to find relevant and well qualified team members for each quality assurance process.

FINEEC was commended by the experts, whom the panel met during the site visit, for arranging well prepared and professional training sessions where team members are exposed to realistic situations and dilemmas, they might meet during a review process in general and a site visit in particular.

The no-conflict-of-interest mechanism conducted by FINEEC seems solid, and there are no examples of team members who have later on been accused of having a personal interest in the result of an audit or accreditation process.

FINEEC has made a great effort to include international experts as members of the audit panels since the last external review in 2010. Half of the audits of quality systems – and all accreditations of engineering degree programmes – are now conducted in English with international experts in the teams.

The panel did get the impression, however, that the process of nominating experts to each quality assurance process could be more transparent, and less depending on the individual project manager at FINEEC, if FINEEC more often made general calls to HE institutions and other stakeholder to nominate experts. A general call was made when the second round of audits was being initiated, and the nomination of student experts seems already to follow a well-defined procedure where FINEEC cooperates with European, national and local student unions.

Panel commendations

The panel would like to commend FINEEC for the major innovation that the introduction of audit processes in English represents. It has made the use of international experts in audit and accreditation teams possible, which is of great value to the institutions, which can now benefit from a completely external view on their systems and processes in audits and accreditations.

The panel would also like to commend FINEEC for its commitment in ensuring gender equity in its governing bodies and in the audit and accreditation teams.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES

Standard:

Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

Evidence

FINEEC has written manuals for all of its quality assurance activities. The manuals are published in Finnish, Swedish and English. The manuals contain audit targets or accreditation standards and describe the possible outcomes of the quality assurance process.

In audits, all decisions are based on criteria published in the Audit Manual. Audits employ a set of criteria based on a scale of four development stages of quality management: absent, emerging, developing and advanced, which are specified for each audit target. The development phase of each audit target is determined individually. Likewise, the development stage of the quality management

for each sample of degree education is determined individually. The FINEEC Project Manager supports the audit team's activities by taking part in the team's discussions as an auditing expert, and by instructing the team on matters concerning the audit criteria and the Higher Education Evaluation Committee's uniform decision policy.

The audit team presents FINEEC's Higher Education Evaluation Committee with its independent appraisal of whether the HEI should pass the audit or whether a re-audit needs to be conducted. The report contains the team's evaluation of the development stage of each audit target. The audit team can propose that the institution passes the audit if none of the targets is 'absent' and if the quality system as a whole (audit target 6) is at least at the 'developing' stage. The Higher Education Evaluation Committee then decides on the audit result. The Committee is responsible for ensuring that decisions are impartial. The Committee may come to a different decision from the one proposed by the audit team, however the decision must be based on evidence presented in the audit report.

In accreditations, the accreditation team evaluates the extent to which the programme fulfils the individual accreditation standards that are defined in the accreditation manual, using a three-point scale:

- Acceptable: the programme meets the standard fully, even if improvements are still possible;
- Conditionally acceptable: the standard is not fully met but the programme can amend it within three years;
- Unacceptable: the programme does not meet the standard and cannot amend it within three years

Based on the evaluation of the individual standards, the accreditation team recommends to the FINEEC Committee for Engineering Education that the programme should be either:

- Accredited without reservation, if all individual standards are acceptable;
- Accredited with conditions, if any of the standards are conditionally acceptable and none are unacceptable;
- Not accredited, if any of the standards are unacceptable.

A report template supports the accreditation team in applying the standards. The FINEEC Committee for Engineering Education decides on the accreditation result based on the report and the recommendation of the accreditation team. The accreditation decision defines the exact period of validity of the accreditation and in the case of a conditional accreditation, the timeframe in which to fulfil the conditions.

Analysis

The material provided by FINEEC as well as the interviews during the site visit clearly show, that the procedures, assessment criteria and outcomes of the quality assurance processes are well described, made public and easily accessible and also well known by the HE institutions.

The interviews also made it clear that FINEEC invests quite a lot of effort in ensuring that the institutions are treated equally, and that assessment and decisions made by the audit and accreditation teams and the two decision making committees are consistent and evidence-based. The team leader of audits has the task to read and give feedback on all audit reports to ensure quality and consistency before they are presented to the Higher Education Evaluation Committee. Discussions in the committee can apparently be long in order to make the right decision, which is consistent with earlier decisions.

The use of experienced experts and a routined staff in FINEEC's higher education unit also support a consistent and evidence-based interpretation of the assessment criteria laid down in the audit and accreditation manuals.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 2.6 REPORTING

Standard:

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

Evidence

FINEEC publishes all its audit and accreditation reports in their entirety on its website. Here, the reports are easy to find and access for any interested individuals or groups. The decision taken on the basis of a report is published together with the report.

In the audits, the audit team draws up a report based on the material accumulated during the evaluation and the analysis of that material. The report points out the strengths and good practices of the HE institution's quality system, and gives the institution recommendations for further development. The reports follow a standardised structure with five main chapters. The audit team is provided with a report template that includes the core issues the team should address in its report chapter by chapter. Prior to the Evaluation Committee's decision-making meeting, the institution is given the opportunity to fact-check the report.

The Evaluation Committee's subsequent decision on whether the institution passes the audit or must be subject to a re-audit is recorded at the end of the report. If the HEI is required to undergo a re-audit, the targets that are in essential need of development and will be subject to a re-audit are recorded in the report.

The report is published in FINEEC's publication series, both as a print copy and in an electronic format. FINEEC publishes its audit reports in full. The audit report is published in the language used in the audit (Finnish, Swedish or English), and a summary abstract is published in Finnish, Swedish and English for each report. The outcome of the audit is communicated to the HEI immediately after the Evaluation Committee's decision-making meeting. The report and an information bulletin are published on FINEEC's website within three working days of the decision.

The full report from the audit of the University of Graz was also published at FINEEC's website. It was clear from the interviews with FINEEC staff that any future cross-border quality assurance projects would follow the same procedures and values as for audits of Finnish HE institutions. This would also include publication of all full reports prepared by FINEEC.

The reporting of the accreditations of engineering degree programmes follows to a large extent the same steps as the audits. The standardized structure of the reports is slightly different with only three main chapters. The accreditation report, without the recommendation for the accreditation result, is submitted to the HEI so it can check the report for factual errors. The accreditation team then finalises the report and formulates its recommendation for the FINEEC Committee for Engineering Education. After the Committee's decision, the decision is published together with the report.

Analysis

The panel finds it well documented that FINEEC publishes the full audit and accreditation reports and make them easily accessible on the agency's website. Members of the review panel have themselves visited the website and found audit and accreditation reports without any difficulties. The panel can confirm that decisions on the outcome of the quality assurance processes are published together with the reports.

The standardized report structures for audit and accreditation reports ensure that all reports contain context descriptions of the quality assurance process and the institution or programme under review. The structure also makes it easy to find the assessments of the individual assessment criteria (audit targets/accreditation standards) as well the overall conclusion and decision based on the analyses of the criteria. The standardized structure of the audit reports makes it easy to find the audit teams analysis of strengths, good practices and recommendations for further development as well.

In both types of quality assurance processes conducted by FINEEC, the institution or programme under review is given the opportunity to comment on factual errors before the report is presented to the decision making body.

During the interviews, the panel heard examples of reports being read by other HE institutions than the one evaluated in the report. Also other stakeholders, for instance one of the student unions, also read the reports, once they are published. The reports were characterized as quite technical with a language primarily intended for an audience consisting of persons inside the HE community, which probably reflects the main purpose of the processes described previously, that of supporting the HEIs in their work.

FINEEC is not yet very active on the social media. It could be a suggestion for improvement that FINEEC takes on a more ambitious approach when it comes to communicating the results of its quality assurance activities and share its massive fact-based knowledge of the state of the art in Finnish higher education. This deeper engagement in society would be to the benefit of the ongoing debate on higher education and of the greater public. This would imply the use of a different tone of language than in the reports, and that the FINEEC staff should be acquainted with using different platforms in the communication of the generated knowledge.

Panel commendations

The panel would like to commend FINEEC for always making summaries in three languages in the reports: Finnish, Swedish and English.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Standard:

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

2010 review recommendation

[The panel recommends FINHEEC] to allow for a form of representation to the Council, subsequent to the audit report, with reference back to the team, in cases where an institution disputed the Council's decision on procedural rounds.

Evidence

FINEEC has developed and implemented an appeals procedure since the last external review in 2010.

The decisions concerning audit results as such, issued by FINEEC's Higher Education Evaluation Committee, are considered expert opinions. They are not considered administrative decisions. According to Finnish law (Administrative Judicial Procedure Act) appeals can only be filed against administrative decisions and not expert opinions to challenge them.

Nevertheless, FINEEC has made it possible to make an appeal, if an HE institution under review is dissatisfied with the Evaluation Committee's decision. The objective of the procedure is to ensure equal treatment of the audited institutions and to guarantee that the Higher Education Evaluation Committee operating under FINEEC makes fair decisions about audit results.

HE institutions may request a review of the result of an audit or of a re-audit conducted by FINEEC. The request may be based on the grounds that the audit has not been performed in compliance with the audit manual, and that the audit, as performed, brings into question the fair and equal treatment of higher education institutions. It is in other words the performance of the audit procedure, which can be appealed against.

The request is processed by an expert team appointed by the Evaluation Council that operates under FINEEC for the duration of the Council's term of office. Until now, only one request to review the result of an audit has been filed to FINEEC, and at the time of the site visit the outcome of the appeals procedure was not decided upon. There is a reference to the procedure in the audit manual, and a full description of the procedure is publicly available in three languages on FINEEC's website.

The appeals procedure for the engineering programmes is identical with the procedure in the audits. If a HE institution is dissatisfied with the conduct of the accreditation process by FINEEC, or with the accreditation result, it can make use of FINEEC's appeals procedure for Engineering Programme Accreditations that is available on FINEEC's website. No appeals have yet been filed to FINEEC in connection to the accreditation of engineering degree programmes.

FINEEC does not have a formal system for complaints, but complaints can be sent or phoned to the Director of FINEEC or to the head of the higher education unit. It is in principle also possible to make a complaint to the ombudsman of the Finnish parliament.

Analysis

The panel is satisfied to see, that an appeals procedure has been established both for audits and accreditations. The panel finds the procedure well described and clearly communicated to the HE institutions.

The procedure does not allow the institutions to appeal the actual conclusion of the audit or accreditation team nor the decisions of the decision-making committees. An appeal of the judgement of an expert committee is not possible according to Finnish law. The panel finds this less optimal, but accepts that decisions concerning audit results or accreditation decisions shall be considered expert opinions – and not administrative decisions. It has been an important factor for the panel in this context that audit results do not have any formal consequences for the institutions, e.g. for funding or for recognition of degrees awarded.

FINEEC does not have a separate system for complaint, but based on the frank and open discussions during the site visit, the panel are absolutely confident, that any formal or less formal complaint about the evaluation process made by an institution under review would be handled in a

professional manner by the management of FINEEC. In the Finnish context, the institutions would have very low barriers for contacting FINEEC, if they had experiences with FINEEC staff or experts that they would want to complain about. A formalised system for complaint would therefore seem somewhat needless.

Panel conclusion: Fully compliant

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS

ESG 3.1

The panel would like to commend FINEEC for its ongoing effort to involve its stakeholders in its work and development activities.

ESG 2.4

The panel would like to commend FINEEC for the major innovation that the introduction of audit processes in English represents. It has made the use of international experts in audit and accreditation teams possible, which is of great value to the institutions which can now benefit from a completely external view on their systems and processes in audits and accreditations.

The panel would also like to commend FINEEC for its commitment in ensuring gender equity in its governing bodies and in the audit and accreditation teams.

ESG 2.6

The panel would like to commend FINEEC for always making summaries in three languages in the reports: Finnish, Swedish and English.

OVERALL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ESG 3.1

To increase the relevance of its work also for other actors beyond the HE institutions, the panel recommends FINEEC to consider, how it could strengthen the involvement of social partners in its governing bodies and ensure a transparent and systematic dialogue and coordination with key stakeholders at the national level, especially the most important labour market organisations, and even with the relevant officials in the Ministry of Education and Culture.

ESG 3.4

The panel recommends FINEEC to quickly initiate the planned thematic analyses and allocate the necessary resources to this activity so that the development of the audit model for the third round can be based on solid knowledge and reflections on the results and experiences from the second round.

ESG 2.1

The panel recommends that FINEEC actively supports initiatives that would lead to Finland's adoption of a national qualifications framework as soon as possible as expected in the Bologna Process.

The panel also recommends FINEEC to take into account the new ESG when developing the new audit model for the third round, so that a clear link between the audit targets and the ESG part 1 is established.

ESG 2.2

The panel recommends FINEEC to supplement its comprehensive efforts in engaging the broad higher education community in the development of the next audit model with more direct consultations with the main stakeholders at the national level, e.g. the rectors' conferences, the social partners and the Ministry, in order to ensure support and consensus about the model.

In light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the review panel is satisfied that, in the performance of its functions, FINEEC is in compliance with the ESG. The panel therefore

recommends to the Board of ENQA that FINEEC should have its membership in ENQA confirmed for a further period of five years.

The ESGs where full compliance has not been achieved are:

3.1: Substantially compliant

3.4: Partially compliant

2.1: Substantially compliant

The agency is recommended to take appropriate action, so far as it is empowered to do so, to achieve full compliance with these standards at the earliest opportunity.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: 2010 AND 2016 EXTERNAL REVIEWS: A COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

ENQA CRITERION/ESG	2010 REVIEW		2016 REVIEW	
	LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE	RECOMMENDATION(S)	LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE	RECOMMENDATION(S)
ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (FORMERLY ESG 2.1)	Partially compliant	The panel [...] recommends that as it carries out its review of the audit method in preparation for the forthcoming 'second round' of audits (from 2012), FINHEEC make explicit reference within its audit criteria to the ESG on the expected components of internal quality assurance, and their evaluation, as laid down Part 1 and Part 2 of the ESG.	Substantially compliant	The panel recommends that FINEEC actively supports initiatives that would lead to Finland's adoption of a national qualifications framework as soon as possible as expected in the Bologna Process. The panel also recommends FINEEC to take into account the new ESG when developing the new audit model for the third round, so that a clear link between the audit targets and the ESG part 1 is established.
ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE (FORMERLY ESG 2.2 AND ESG 2.4)	Fully/ Substantial compliant		Fully compliant	The panel recommends FINEEC to supplement its comprehensive efforts in engaging the broad higher education community in the development of the next audit model with more direct consultations with the main stakeholders at the national level, e.g. the rectors' conferences, the social partners and the Ministry, in order to ensure support and consensus about the model.
ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES (FORMERLY ESG 2.6 AND 3.7)	Fully compliant		Fully compliant	
ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS (FORMERLY ESG 3.7)	Fully compliant	The panel [...] recommends that FINHEEC give continuing attention to the question of international expert participation in its processes, including consideration of international membership of the Council and the establishment of the proposed international advisory committee.	Fully compliant	
ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES (FORMERLY ESG 2.3 AND 3.7)	Fully compliant		Fully compliant	
ESG 2.6 REPORTING (FORMERLY ESG 2.5)	Fully compliant		Fully compliant	
ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS (FORMERLY ESG 2.7 AND 3.7 [GUIDELINE])	Fully compliant	[The panel recommends FINHEEC] to allow for a form of representation to the Council, subsequent to the audit report, with reference back to the team, in cases where an institution disputed the Council's decision on procedural rounds.	Fully compliant	

3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE (FORMERLY ESG 3.1, 3.3, AND 3.5)	Fully compliant		Substantially compliant	To increase the relevance of its work also for other actors beyond the HE institutions, the panel recommends FINEEC to consider, how it could strengthen the involvement of social partners in its governing bodies and ensure a transparent and systematic dialogue and coordination with key stakeholders at the national level, especially the most important labour market organisations, and even with the relevant officials in the Ministry of Education and Culture.
3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS (FORMERLY ESG 3.2)	Fully compliant		Fully compliant	
3.3 INDEPENDENCE (FORMERLY ESG 3.6)	Fully compliant		Fully compliant	
3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS (FORMERLY ESG 2.8)	Fully compliant		Partially compliant	The panel recommends FINEEC to quickly initiate and complete the planned thematic analyses and allocate the necessary resources to this activity so that the development of the audit model for the third round can be based on solid knowledge and reflections on the results and experiences from the second round.
3.5 RESOURCES (FORMERLY ESG 3.4)	Fully compliant		Fully compliant	
3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT (FORMERLY ESG 3.8)	Fully compliant		Fully compliant	
3.7 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES (FORMERLY ESG 3.8 [GUIDELINE])	Fully compliant		Fully compliant	

ANNEX 2: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

MONDAY 05.09.2016				
3 hours	Review panel's kick-off meeting and preparations for day I			
TUESDAY 06.09.2016				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
30 minutes	Review panel's private meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matti Kajaste was available for clarifications. 		
60 minutes	Meeting with the Directorate of FINEEC and Chair of the Evaluation Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harri Peltoniemi (Director) Anu Räisänen (Deputy Director) Helka Kekäläinen (Head of HE Department) Tapio Huttula (Chair of the Evaluation Council) Päivi Kamppi (Head of the General and Vocation Education Evaluation Unit (Jyväskylä). 		
15 minutes	Review panel's private discussion			
60 minutes	Meeting with the FINEEC Committee responsible for the self-evaluation report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matti Kajaste (In charge of the IQA) Kirsi Hiltunen (Team leader of Team of Audits) Touko Apajalahti (In charge of engineering accreditations). 		
15 minutes	Review panel's private discussion			
45 minutes	Meeting with representatives of the HE Evaluation Committee and the Committee for Engineering Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jouni Välijärvi (chair) Anneli Pirttilä (vice-chair) Tapio Heiskari (students' representative) Katrina Nordström (Univ. sector) Silja Kostia (Engineering Education) 		
60 minutes	Lunch (panel only)			
60 minutes	Meeting with all FINEEC staff from the Department for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marja-Liisa Saari Lammi, Counsellor of Evaluation Kirsi Mustonen, Senior Advisor Mirella Nordblad, Senior Advisor Kati Isoaho, Senior Advisor Outi Hakola, Senior Advisor Eerikki Vainio, Planning Officer (international affairs and evaluation). 		
15 minutes	Review panel's private discussion			
60 minutes	Meeting with FINEEC reviewers / experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kaarlo Hilden, Dean, Sibelius Academy Antti Saaristo, Development Manager, Aalto University 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susanna Niinistö-Sivuranta, Vice-rector, Laurea UAS • Kari Seppälä, Senior Advisor, University of Turku • Lotta Saarikoski, Principal Lecturer, Vaasa UAS • Eero Pekkarinen, RDI Director, Lapland UAS. 		
90 minutes	Wrap-up meeting among panel members and preparations for day II			
WEDNESDAY 07.09.2016				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
30 minutes	Review panel private meeting and tour of the offices			
60 minutes	Meeting with the rector representatives of Universities Finland (UNIFI) and of Rectors' Council of the Universities of Applied Sciences (ARENE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riitta Rissanen (Secretary-General of ARENE) • Riitta Pyykkö, Vice-Rector, University of Turku • Jari Kuusisto, Rector, University of Vaasa • Turo Kilpeläinen, Rector, Kajaani UAS • Heikki Malinen, Vice-Rector, Jyväskylä UAS. 		
15 minutes	Review panel's private discussion			
45 minutes	Meeting with the representatives of National Union of University Students in Finland (SYL) and of The Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (SAMOK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heikki Koponen (President, SYL) • Eero Manninen (Secretary-General, SYL) • Anni Vesa (President, SAMOK) • Milla Halme (Director of Advocacy, SAMOK). 		
10 minutes	Review panel's private discussion			
45 minutes	Meeting with representatives of main stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miika Sahamies, Advisor, Akava trades union • Seppo Hölttä, Professor, Higher Education Group, University of Tampere • Mika Tuuliainen, Head of Educational Affairs, The Federation of Finnish Enterprises • Heikki Holopainen, Senior Advisor, Association of Finnish Independent Education Employers • Marita Aho, Senior Advisor, Confederation of Finnish Industries EK • Juhani Nokela, Adviser, Academic 		

		Engineers and Architects in Finland.		
10 minutes	Review panel's private discussion			
45 minutes	Meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tapio Kosunen, Director General, Ministry of Education and Culture • Johanna Moisio, Counsellor of Education, Ministry of Education and Culture • Birgitta Vuorinen, Counsellor of Education, Ministry of Education and Culture 		
60 minutes	Lunch (panel only)			
45 minutes	Meeting with Heads of Quality Management of Higher Education Institutions and Programs that have undergone FINEEC reviews in 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marjo-Riitta Järvinen, Vice-rector, Lahti UAS • Tero Janatuinen, Quality Manager, Jyväskylä UAS • Pirjo Halonen, Quality Manager, University of Jyväskylä • Hannele Keränen, Quality Manager, Lapland UAS • Kirsi Eulenberger-Karvetti, Quality Manager, Aalto University • Jussi Järvi, Quality Manager, Laurea UAS. 		
10 minutes	Review panel's private discussion			
45 minutes	Meeting with academic staffs from Higher Education Institutions and Programs that have undergone FINEEC reviews in 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anssi Suhonen, Senior Lecturer, Savonia UAS • Raili Hilden, University Lecturer, University of Helsinki • Virpi Kaartti, Head of the degree programme in Service Innovation and Design, Laurea UAS • Eeva-Liisa Viskari, Principal Lecturer, Tampere UAS. 		
75 minutes	Private meeting among panel members to agree on the main findings and on final issues to clarify			
45 minutes	Final de-briefing meeting with FINEEC's Directorate and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harri Peltoniemi (Director) • Anu Räisänen (Deputy Director) • Helka Kekäläinen (Head of HE Department) • Tapio Huttula (Chair of the Evaluation Council) • Kirsi Hiltunen (Team leader of the Team for Audits) • Matti Kajaste (In charge of the IQA). 		

ANNEX 3: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW

External review of the Finnish Education Evaluation Council (FINEEC) by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

December 2015

1. Background and Context

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) is an independent government agency responsible for the evaluation of education. It carries out evaluations related to education including the operations of education providers from early childhood education to higher education. FINEEC comprises an Evaluation Council, a Higher Education Evaluation Committee and units for the evaluation of general education, vocational education and training (VET) and higher education.

The aim of FINEEC is to implement evaluations related to education, education providers and higher education institutions (HEIs). In addition, FINEEC implements assessment of learning outcomes for basic and upper secondary educations. Moreover, FINEEC's duties include supporting education providers and HEIs in issues related to evaluation and quality assurance, as well as developing education evaluation. Provisions on the duties and organisation of FINEEC are laid down in the Act 1295/2013 and Government decree 1317/2013.

The aim of the evaluations is to develop education and to support learning while ensuring the quality of education. The evaluations also produce information for local, regional and national decision-making on education as well as development work and international comparison.

FINEEC started its operations on 1 May 2014. It was formed by combining the evaluation activities of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council, the Finnish Education Evaluation Council and the Finnish National Board of Education. The aim was to collect duties and competence related to evaluation under a clear entity and to consolidate evaluation activities crossing educational level boundaries.

FINHEEC, the predecessor of FINEEC has been a member of ENQA since September 2000 and is applying for renewal of ENQA membership.

FINEEC is applying for registration on EQAR.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

This review will evaluate the way in which and to what extent FINEEC fulfils the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Consequently, the review will provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether membership of FINEEC should be granted and to EQAR to support FINEEC application to the register.

The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards granting membership.

2.1 Activities of FINEEC within the scope of the ESG

In order for FINEEC to apply for ENQA membership and for registration in EQAR, this review will analyse all activities of FINEEC that are within the scope of the ESG, i.e. reviews, audits, evaluations or accreditation of higher education institutions or programmes that relate to teaching and learning (and their relevant links to research and innovation). This is regardless of whether these activities are carried out within or outside the EHEA, and whether they are obligatory or voluntary.

The following activities of FINEEC have to be addressed in the external review:

- Audits of Quality Systems of Higher Education Institutions
- Thematic Evaluations
- Engineering Programme Reviews (EUR-ACE)

3. The Review Process

The process is designed in the light of the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and in line with the requirements of the *EQAR Procedures for Applications*.

The evaluation procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of the Terms of Reference and protocol for the review;
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-assessment by FINEEC including the preparation of a self-assessment report;
- A site visit by the review panel to FINEEC;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final evaluation report by the ENQA Review Committee;
- Analysis of the scrutiny by the ENQA Board and their decision regarding ENQA membership;
- Follow-up of the panel's and/or ENQA Board's recommendations by the agency, including a voluntary follow-up visit.

3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review team members

The review panel consists of four members: one or two quality assurance experts, an academic employed by a higher education institution, student member, and eventually a labour market representative (if requested). One of the members will serve as the chair of the review panel, and another member as a review secretary. For ENQA Agency Reviews at least one of the reviewers is an ENQA nominee (most often the QA professional[s]). At least one of the reviewers is appointed from the nominees of either the European University Association (EUA) or the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), and the student member is always selected from among the ESU-nominated reviewers. If requested, the labour market representative may come from the Business Europe nominees or from ENQA. An additional panel member may be included in the panel at the request of the agency under review. In this case an additional fee to cover the reviewer's fee and travel expenses is applied.

The panel will be supported by the ENQA Secretariat review coordinator who will monitor the integrity of the process and ensure that ENQA expectations are met throughout the process. The ENQA staff member will not be the Secretary of the review and will not participate in the discussions during the site visit interviews.

Current members of the ENQA Board are not eligible to serve as reviewers.

ENQA will provide FINEEC with the list of suggested experts with their respective curriculum vitae to establish that there are no known conflicts of interest. The experts will have to sign a non-conflict of interest statement as regards FINEEC review.

3.2 Self-assessment by FINEEC, including the preparation of a self-assessment report

FINEEC is responsible for the execution and organisation of its own self-assessment process and shall take into account the following guidance:

- Self-assessment is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- The self-assessment report is broken down by the topics of the evaluation and is expected to contain, among others: a brief description of the national HE and QA system; background description of the current situation of the Agency; an analysis and appraisal of the current situation; proposals for improvement and measures already planned; a SWOT analysis; each criterion (ESG part II and III) addressed individually. All agency's QA activities (whether within their national jurisdiction or outside of it, and whether obligatory or voluntary) will be described and their compliance with the ESG analysed.
- The report is well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which FINEEC fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the ESG and thus the requirements of ENQA membership.
- The self-assessment report is submitted to the ENQA Secretariat who has 4 weeks to pre-scrutinise it before forwarding the report to the panel of experts. The purpose of the pre-scrutiny is to ensure that the self-assessment report is satisfactory for the consideration of the panel. The Secretariat will not judge the content of information itself but whether the necessary information, as stated in the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews, is present. For the second and subsequent reviews, the agency is expected to enlist the recommendations provided in the previous review and to outline actions taken to meet these recommendations. In case the self-assessment report does not contain the necessary information and fails to respect the requested form and content, the ENQA Secretariat reserves the right to reject the report and ask for a revised version within 4 weeks. In such cases, an additional fee of 1000 € will be charged to the agency.
- The report is submitted to the review panel a minimum of six weeks prior to the site visit.

3.3 A Site Visit by the Review Panel

FINEEC will draw up a draft proposal of the schedule for the site visit to be submitted to the review panel at least two months before the planned dates of the visit. The schedule includes an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises to be undertaken by the review panel during the site visit, the duration of which is 2,5 days. The approved schedule shall be given to FINEEC at least one month before the site visit, in order to properly organise the requested interviews.

The review panel will be assisted by FINEEC in arriving in Helsinki, Finland.

The site visit will close with an oral presentation and discussion of the major issues of the evaluation between the review panel and FINEEC.

3.4 Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report

On the basis of the review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report in consultation with the review panel. The report will take into account the purpose and scope of the evaluation as

defined under articles 2 and 2.1. It will also provide a clear rationale for its findings with regards to each ESG. A draft will be first submitted to the ENQA review coordinator who will check the report for consistency, clarity and language and it will be then submitted to FINEEC within 11 weeks of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If FINEEC chooses to provide a statement in reference to the draft report it will be submitted to the chair of the review panel within two weeks after the receipt of the draft report. Thereafter the review panel will take into account the statement by FINEEC, finalise the document and submit it to FINEEC and ENQA.

The report is to be finalised within three months of the site visit and will not exceed 40 pages in length.

When preparing the report, the review panel should also bear in mind the *EQAR Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG*, so as to ensure that the report will contain sufficient information for the Register Committee for application to EQAR.

FINEEC is also requested to provide a letter addressed to the ENQA Board outlining its motivation applying for membership and the ways in which FINEEC expects to contribute to the work and objectives of ENQA during its membership. This letter will be discussed along with the final evaluation report.

4. Follow-up Process and Publication of the Report

FINEEC will consider the expert panel's report and will publish it on its website once the ENQA Board has made its decision. The report will also be published on the ENQA website, regardless of the review outcome and decision by the ENQA Board. FINEEC commits to preparing a follow-up plan in which it addresses the recommendations of the review panel and to submitting a follow-up report to the ENQA Board. The follow-up report will be published on the ENQA website, in addition to the full review report and the Board's decision.

The follow-up report will be complemented by a small-scale visit to the agency performed by two members of the original panel (whenever possible). This visit will be used to discuss issues, based on the ESG, considered as of particular importance or challenge by FINEEC. Its purpose is entirely developmental and has no impact on the judgement of membership and/or compliance of the agency with the ESG. Should the agency not wish to take advantage of this opportunity, it may opt out by informing the ENQA Review Coordinator about this.

5. Use of the report

ENQA shall retain ownership of the report. The intellectual property of all works created by the expert panel in connection with the review contract, including specifically any written reports, shall be vested in ENQA.

The review report is used by the Board of ENQA for the purpose of reaching a conclusion on whether FINEEC has met the ESG and can be thus admitted as a member of ENQA. The report will also be used for registration on EQAR, and is designed so as to serve these two purposes. However, the review report is to be considered final only after being approved by the ENQA Board. Once submitted to FINEEC and ENQA and until it is approved by the Board the report may not be used or relied upon by FINEEC, the panel and any third party and may not be disclosed without the prior written consent of ENQA. FINEEC may use the report at its discretion only after the Board has approved of the report. The approval of the report is independent of the decision on membership.

The Chair of the panel shall remain available to respond to questions of clarification or further information from the EQAR Register Committee provided that the ENQA Secretariat is copied in all such requests.

6. Budget

FINEEC shall pay the following review related fees:

Fee of the Chair	4,500 EUR
Fee of the Secretary	4,500 EUR
Fee of the 2 other panel members	4,000 EUR (2,000 EUR each)
Fee of 2 panel members for follow-up visit	1,000 EUR (500 EUR each)
Administrative overhead for ENQA Secretariat	7,000 EUR
Experts Training fund	1,400 EUR
Approximate travel and subsistence expenses	6,000 EUR
Travel and subsistence expenses follow-up visit	1,600 EUR

This gives a total indicative cost of 30,000.00 EUR VAT excl. for a review team of 4 members. In the case that the allowance for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, FINEEC will cover any additional costs after the completion of the review. However, the ENQA Secretariat will endeavour to keep the travel and subsistence expenses in the limits of the planned budget, and will refund the difference to FINEEC if the travel and subsistence expenses go under budget.

The fee of the follow-up visit is included in the overall cost of the review and will not be reimbursed in case the agency does not wish to benefit from it.

In the event of a second site visit required by the Board and aiming at completing the assessment of compliance, and should the agency accept a second visit, an additional fee of 500 EUR per expert, as well as travel and subsistence costs are recoverable from the agency.

7. Indicative Schedule of the Review

Agreement on terms of reference	January 2016
Appointment of review panel members	January/February 2016
Self-assessment completed	April 2016
Pre-screening of SER by ENQA coordinator	May 2016
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	June 2016
Briefing of review panel members	July 2016
Review panel site visit	September 2016
Draft of evaluation report and submitting it to ENQA coordinator for pre-screening	November 2016
Draft of evaluation report to FINEEC	December 2016
Statement of FINEEC to review panel if necessary	December 2016
Submission of final report to ENQA	Early January 2017
Consideration of the report by ENQA Board and response of FINEEC	February 2017
Publication of the report	February 2017

ANNEX 4: GLOSSARY

ENAE	European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015
EUA	The European University Association
EUR-ACE	European Accreditation of Engineering Programmes: A framework and accreditation system that provides a set of standards that identifies high quality engineering degree programmes in Europe and abroad.
FINEEC	The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre
FINHEEC	The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council
HE	Higher Education
MoEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
QA	Quality assurance
SAR	Self-assessment report
UAS	Universities of Applied Science

ANNEX 5. DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE REVIEW

DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY FINEEC

- FINEEC's Self-Assessment Report (ENG)
- FINEEC's written response to questions asked by the external review panel prior to the site visit (ENG)
- Acceptance Letter regarding FINEEC's Inclusion on EQAR in 2010 (ENG)
- FINEEC's 2014 Provisional Registration at EQAR (ENG)
- FINEEC's Internal Quality Management Development Report 2015-2016 (ENG)
- FINEEC's internal analysis of the connection between questions asked in FINEEC's feedback form for reviewed HE institutions and the ESG (ENG)
- List of members of FINEEC's Planning Group for 3rd audit round (ENG).

OTHER REFERENCE SOURCES USED BY THE REVIEW PANEL

- FINEEC's homepage (<https://karvi.fi/en/>)

ANNEX 6. CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (ESG PART 1) IN FINEEC AUDITS

Part 1: Standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance	How FINEEC audits address the ESG Part 1
<p>1.1 Policy for quality assurance Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.</p>	<p>1. Quality policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How clearly are the institution’s quality policy’s rationale, objectives and division of responsibilities defined? • How inclusive has the definition process been? • How accessible is the quality policy to internal and external stakeholders? • How does the quality policy take into account the information needs of the stakeholders? • How is the quality policy communicated to all stakeholders? • How clearly is the quality policy linked to the institution’s overall strategy? <p>2. Quality system’s link with strategic management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the quality system serve strategic and operations management? • How established are the procedures for ensuring that the information produced is communicated systematically within the institution and to external stakeholders? • How do the quality systems work across different organizational levels and units? <p>3. Development of the quality system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures to evaluate and develop the quality system • Ability to identify the system’s strengths and areas in need of development • Evidence of the system’s successful development work • Workload produced by the system <p>4. Quality management of institution’s core duties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of staff, students and external stakeholders in quality work • Workload produced by the system <p>6. The quality system as a whole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensiveness and impact of the quality system • What measures does the institution use to advance the emergence and development of a quality culture? • How well-established is the institution’s quality culture?
<p>1.2 Design and approval of programmes Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</p>	<p>4a) Quality management of degree education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the quality management procedures advance the development of degree education and the achievement of goals set for the operations? • Involvement of staff, students and external stakeholders in quality work <p>5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functioning of the quality management procedures related to the planning of educational provision (curricula and their preparation; intended learning outcomes and their definition; links between research as well as artistic activities and education; lifelong learning; relevance of degrees to working life) and how they support the planning of the programme • Involvement of staff, students and external stakeholders.
<p>1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.</p>	<p>4a) Quality management of degree education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functioning of the quality management procedures and their impact on the development of education • Comprehensiveness, usability and utilisation of the information produced by the quality system in the development of education • Involvement of students in quality work <p>5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functioning of the quality management procedures related to the implementation of educational provision (teaching methods and learning environments; methods used to assess learning; student’s learning and well-being) and how they support the implementation of the programme • Participation of students in quality work related to the degree programme

<p>1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification</p> <p>Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.</p>	<p>4a) Quality management of degree education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the quality management procedures advance the development of education and the achievement of goals set for operations? <p>5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning of the programme (lifelong learning) • Effectiveness of the quality work (suitability of key evaluation methods and follow-up indicators and their impact)
<p>1.5 Teaching staff</p> <p>Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.</p>	<p>4a) Quality management of degree education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the quality management procedures advance the development of education and the achievement of goals set for the operations? • Key support services for education <p>5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functioning of the quality management procedures related to the planning of the programme (links between research, artistic activities and education) • Functioning of the quality management procedures related to the implementation of educational provision (teaching methods and learning environments; methods used to assess learning; student’s learning and well-being; teacher’s competence and occupational well-being) and how they support the implementation of the programme.
<p>1.6 Learning resources and student support</p> <p>Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.</p>	<p>2. Quality system’s link with strategic management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the quality system and the information it produces serve strategic and operations management? <p>4a) Quality management of degree education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the quality management procedures advance the development of education and the achievement of goals set for the operations? • Key support services for education <p>5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functioning of the quality management procedures related to the implementation of educational provision (teaching methods and learning environments; teachers’ competence; student’s learning and well-being) and how they support the implementation of the programme.
<p>1.7 Information management</p> <p>Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.</p>	<p>2. Quality system’s link with strategic management;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the quality system and the information it produces serve strategic and operations management? • How systematic and wide is the use of the information? <p>4. Quality management of the core duties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How relevant is the information produced by the quality system for the development of the core duties and how is the information used to develop the core duties? <p>5. Samples of degree programmes: degree programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability of key evaluation methods and follow-up indicators and their impact on the achievement of goals.
<p>1.8 Public information</p> <p>Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.</p>	<p>1. Quality policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the quality policy communicated? • How are the information needs of internal and external stakeholders taken into account? <p>2. Quality system’s links with strategic management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the information produced communicated and how up-to-date is the communication within the institution and with external stakeholders?
<p>1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes</p> <p>Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.</p>	<p>4a) quality management of degree education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the quality management procedures advance the development of the institution’s core duties and the achievement of goals set for the operations? • How is the information produced communicated within the institution and to external stakeholders? • Key support services for core duties • Participation of internal and external stakeholders in quality work <p>5. Samples of degree education: degree programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning of educational provision (revision of curricula; links between

	<p>research, artistic activities and education; monitoring of the relevance of degrees to working life)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of educational provision (continuous assessment of teaching methods and learning environments; methods to assess learning) • Evidence for effectiveness (suitability of key evaluation methods and follow-up indicators and their impact on the achievement of goals) of the quality work related to the programme • Measures currently in progress for improving the quality of • participation of internal and external stakeholders in quality work
<p>1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.</p>	<p>FINEEC conducts institutional audits in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis. The quality label is valid for six years and, thus, the FINEEC procedure requires an audit of the HEI to take place every six years. FINEEC’s external quality assurance procedure is a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback or report or its follow-up process within the institution. Therefore, institutions are required to ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one (audit target 3: follow-up of the development work after the previous audit).</p>

ANNEX 7. CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN FINEEC'S ENGINEERING DEGREE PROGRAMME ACCREDITATIONS

Part 1: Standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance	How FINEEC Engineering programme accreditation standards address the ESG Part 1
<p>1.1 Policy for quality assurance Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.</p>	<p>15) The quality management procedures of the programme are consistent with the quality policy of the higher education institution. 16) The organisation and decision-making processes of the programme are fit for effective management. 17) In the education programme the programme aims, curriculum, teaching and learning process, resources and partnerships and quality management are reviewed and developed in a systematic and regular manner, taking into account analysis of results of student admissions, students' study progress, achieved learning levels, student, graduate and employer feedback and graduate's employment data. 18) In the programme, up to date public information about its objectives, teaching and learning process, resources, quality management procedures and results is provided.</p>
<p>1.2 Design and approval of programmes Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</p>	<p>1) The programme aims, which describe the educational task and purpose of the programme, are consistent with the mission of the higher education institution and reflect the identified needs of employers and other stakeholders. 2) The programme learning outcomes, which describe the knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities that the programme enables graduates to demonstrate, are consistent with the programme aims, and that these are linked to relevant national qualification frameworks (if applicable) and with the FINEEC reference programme learning outcomes (defined in the accreditation manual). 3) The course level learning outcomes, including thesis work and possible practical training, aggregate to the programme's learning outcomes. 8) The teaching and learning process, including the assessment of students, enables students to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended course and programme level learning outcomes. Students have an active role in co-creating the learning process and the assessment of students reflects this approach.</p>
<p>1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.</p>	<p>8) The teaching and learning process, including the assessment of students, enables students to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended course and programme level learning outcomes. Students have an active role in co-creating the learning process and the assessment of students reflects this approach.</p>
<p>1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.</p>	<p>6) The criteria and process for student admission and transfer are clearly specified and published. Students should be informed of the qualifications necessary to enter the programme. 7) Students are informed of regulations and guidelines that concern recognition of prior learning, progress of studies and graduation.</p>
<p>1.5 Teaching staff Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.</p>	<p>9) The academic staff are sufficient in number and qualification to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme. There are arrangements in place to keep the pedagogical and professional competence of the academic staff up to date. 10) An effective team of technical and administrative staff supports the programme. There are arrangements in place to keep the competence of the support staff up to date.</p>
<p>1.6 Learning resources and student support Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.</p>	<p>11) The students are provided with adequate and accessible support services to enable the achievement of the programme's learning outcomes. 12) The classrooms, computing facilities, software, laboratories, workshops, libraries and associated equipment and services are sufficient and accessible to enable students to achieve the programme's learning outcomes. 13) The HEI and the programme have external partnerships that are adequate for achieving the programme's learning outcomes. 14) The financial resources are sufficient to implement the learning process as planned and to further develop it.</p>

<p>1.7 Information management Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.</p>	<p>17) The programme reviews and develops the programme aims, curriculum, teaching and learning process, resources and partnerships and quality management in a systematic and regular manner, taking into account analysis of results of student admissions, students' study progress, achieved learning levels, as well as student, graduate and employer feedback and graduate employment data.</p>
<p>1.8 Public information Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.</p>	<p>18) The programme provides up to date public information about its objectives, teaching and learning process, resources, quality management procedures and results.</p>
<p>1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.</p>	<p>1) The programme aims, which describe the educational task and purpose of the programme, are consistent with the mission of the higher education institution and reflect the identified needs of employers and other stakeholders. 17) The programme reviews and develops the programme aims, curriculum, teaching and learning process, resources and partnerships and quality management in a systematic and regular manner, taking into account analysis of results of student admissions, students' study progress, achieved learning levels, as well as student, graduate and employer feedback and graduate employment data.</p>
<p>1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.</p>	<p>The engineering programme accreditation is a voluntary external quality assurance method for the institutions. The accreditation is valid for six years</p>



THIS REPORT presents findings of the ENQA Agency Review of the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) undertaken in 2016.



2017 ENQA AGENCY REVIEW