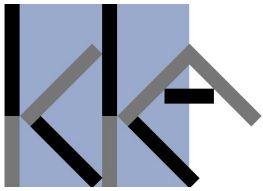


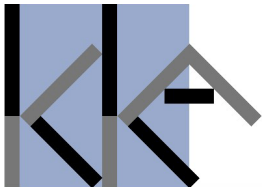
Financial incentives to improve quality and relevance of higher education in Finland

Kirsi Hiltunen and Matti Kajaste
Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council
- FINHEEC



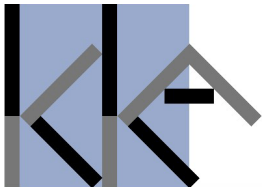
Finnish higher education system

- Two complementary sectors
 - universities, which focus on scientific research
 - polytechnics = professionally oriented HEIs
- All universities government-run and primarily financed by state budget (->2009)
- Polytechnics (from 1990s onwards) either municipal or private institutions, authorised by the government; government and local authorities share the costs
- HE system has been quite stable, today a major structural reform going on
- A society of mutual trust, steered by information



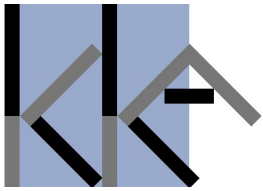
FINHEEC and its duties

- an independent expert body
- appointed by the Ministry of Education
- assists HEIs and the Ministry of Education in issues relating to evaluation
- organises evaluations on the operations of HEIs and HE policy
- initiates evaluations of HE and promote its evaluation
- engages in international evaluation cooperation



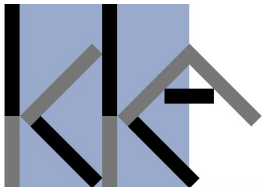
Enhancement-led evaluations as the premise for FINHEEC operations

- to support HEIs in their endeavours to improve the education they offer
- to produce information which HEIs can use in developing their own operations
- to exchange and disseminate the good practices identified in evaluations among other HEIs > reports, seminars, some funding for development projects
- HEIs by law responsible for their operations and quality
- HEIs have the ultimate responsibility to utilise and implement the information and recommendations provided in evaluations.



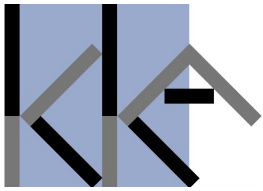
Centres of Excellence system

- CoEs traditionally related to research, Finland has also CoEs in education
- the only part of the FINHEEC's operations, where financial incentives are utilised
- MinEdu provides performance-based funding to the selected units
- goals of the CE system:
 - to emphasise the significance of education in parallel with research;
 - to improve the quality and relevance of education;
 - to provide support for continuous improvement of education



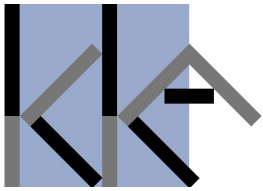
Centres of Excellence system

- **In university education:**
 - Five evaluations since 1998
- **In polytechnic education:**
 - Four evaluations since 1999
 - Also three evaluations of CoEs in regional impact
- **In Research:**
 - The Academy of Finland selects CoEs in research



Structure of the evaluation

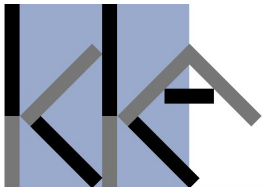
- FINHEEC appoints evaluation team and publishes the criteria
- Self-assessment: units write applications to FINHEEC
- Evaluation team selects units for site visits and conducts them
- Evaluation team makes a proposal for FINHEEC and writes a report and feedback to all applicants
- FINHEEC decides on Centres of Excellence
- MinEdu provides extra funding to the CoE's



What is Quality in Education?

(according to evaluation groups...)

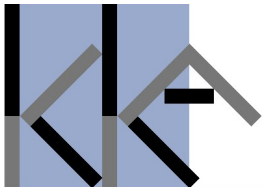
- clear profile and mission of the education
- logical link to HEI strategy
- pedagogical training of the teaching staff
- making degrees meaningful entities
- interlinking research/R&D and teaching
- versatile and international cooperation and networking in education and research
- continual and systematic development of education
- pedagogical innovativeness supported by performance



What is Quality in Education?

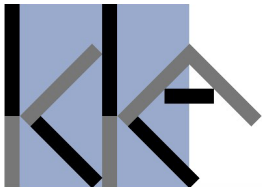
(according to evaluation groups...)

- teaching and evaluation methods that enhance deep learning and active participation of the whole work community and students
- involving the working life in the development of the unit
- curriculum reform to promote learning
- research-based attitude to teaching
- proactive attitude to future challenges



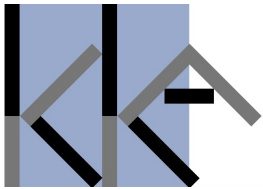
Strengths of the Method

- Ability to evaluate quality of education in a credible way
- Ability to raise good practices for the benefit of the whole field
- Ability to create useful feedback and ideas to the applicant units for further development



Challenges of the Method

- The first stage where units for site visits selected according to written applications
- Learning to apply, often same units selected
- Is "quality" of education being evaluated?
- Difficulty to compare very different applicants
- Does the method support multidisciplinary?
- Follow up mechanism: How to spread the best practices most effectively



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