

KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY QUALITY MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The Quality Management Guidelines of Kaunas University of Technology define the objective, principles and system of quality management at Kaunas University of Technology (hereinafter – University or KTU) as well as quality assurance processes and the main actors involved in these processes and their responsibilities.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

The main **objective** of quality management at the University is to be a strong socially responsible organisation that fosters an academic environment - attracts motivated students and high-performing employees - by ensuring the integrity of quality management processes and the University's strategy.

The University's quality management system is based on the following key **principles**:

- synergy with key national and international quality regulations and guidelines in higher education;
- quality assurance and quality development are guided by the University's vision, mission, values, strategy, priority areas of activities and objectives set out in the action plan;
- promoting leadership at all levels of management to enable quality management of the organisation;
- continuous monitoring, evaluation and improvement of study, research and organisational management activities and processes to ensure the quality and efficiency of the University's activities;
- data management assurance in operational processes and data-driven decision-making;
- involving all University's social stakeholders in quality assurance and improvement processes;
- ensuring the efficient use of resources and the systematic development of the competencies of the University's employees;
- accurate, clear, transparent and objective communication, focusing on all the University's social stakeholders.

The University's quality management principles are inseparable from the development and implementation of the organisation's strategic objectives, aspirations, priority activities and plans. Formulated and consistently implemented, University's strategy helps to shape the organisation's structure and vision and set strategic directions and priority objectives. The latter, in turn, have a direct impact not only on decisions that can be measured as quantitative results but also on the qualitative principles of the organisation's management.

In implementing the University's strategic objectives, the University community aims to ensure high quality of study and research results, consistently improve performance results and build a University's ecosystem based on trust, creativity and leadership. To become a university recognised in Europe and internationally competitive, the University implements and continuously improves its quality system based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education (hereinafter - ESQF), the key higher education policy documents of the European Union, the European

Qualifications Framework, the European standards and guidelines, the laws and legislation governing higher education in the Republic of Lithuania, and best practices. The compliance of the University's quality management system with the ESG is based on the University's legislation.

Quality management focuses on the quality of the organisation's main value chains (studies, research and innovation, organisation development) and the quality of the activities and results they produce, and is based on a holistic view of the University's processes and the involvement of all social stakeholders. The University aims to meet the expectations of social stakeholders and promote a culture of continuous improvement and cooperation.

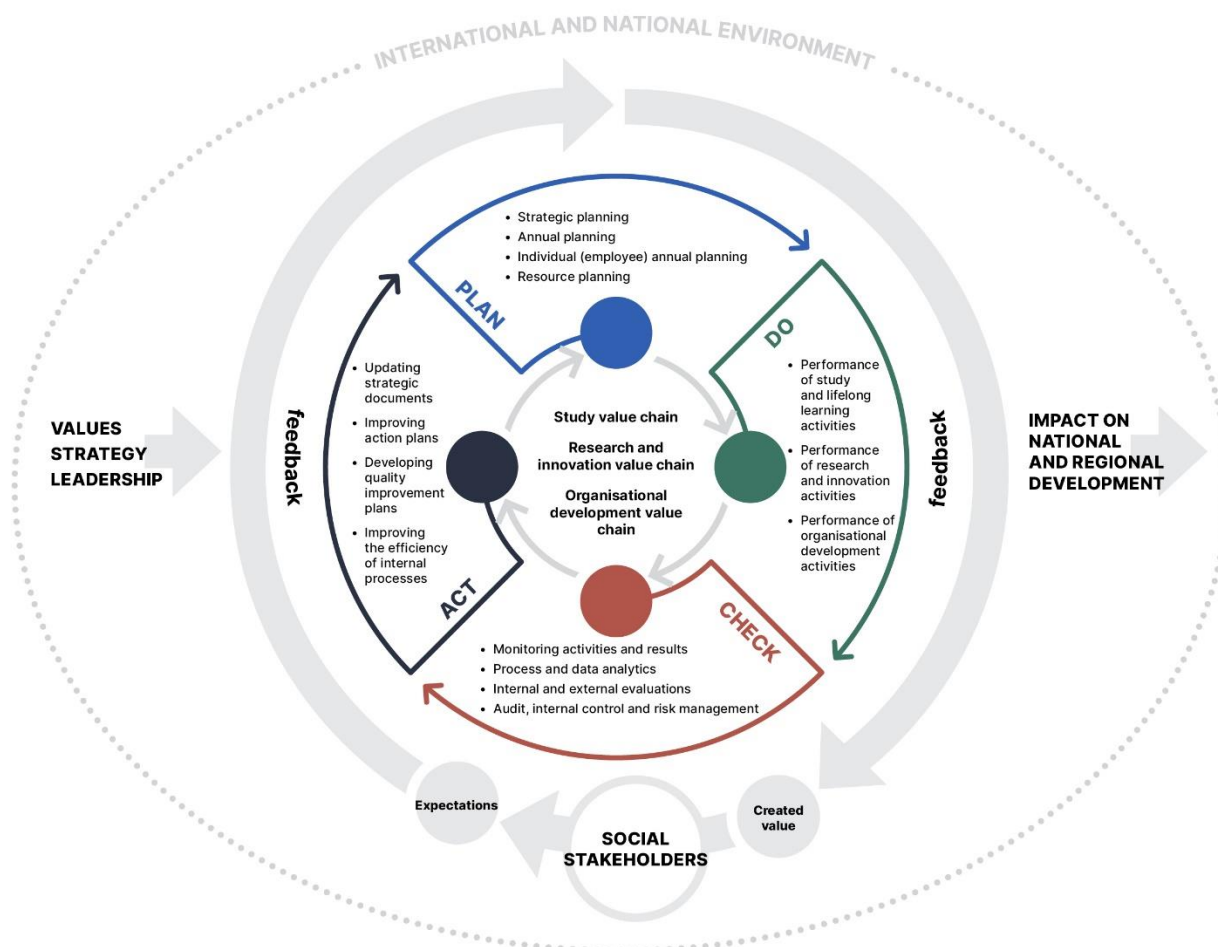
Quality management in studies is based on six key elements: the study management model, the organisation of student-centred education, the system for the development of lecturers' competencies, the system for the success of students at the University, the monitoring system and the publicity to the community and the public.

Quality management in research and innovation is based on the relevance of knowledge, interdisciplinarity and competitiveness in the international environment, the creation of value in transferred knowledge and technology, the impact on society, the development of partnerships and entrepreneurship, and the development of scientific and general competencies of academic employees and doctoral students.

Quality management in organisational development is based on effective resource management, promoting leadership, consistently improving the quality of operational processes, focusing on people and their well-being, developing competencies, fostering sustainability and social responsibility, ensuring smooth communication, and fostering community unity.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The University's quality management system comprises processes, measures and activities applied by KTU to meet the quality requirements shaped by the international and national environment and achieve the strategic objectives of the organisation (see fig.). The system is based on the PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act/Adjust) model which enables quality assurance and continuous improvement of activities/processes. The model helps to ensure the implementation of regular action planning processes, including the launching of new initiatives to promote the development of the quality of the University's activities, the various levels of planning of the University's activities (from the preparation of long-term planning documents at the strategic level to the short-term planning of activities of individual employees); periodic monitoring processes, internal control and assessment of operational risks; the provision of feedback, the identification and analysis of problems and areas for improvement; and continuous improvement of performance.



Pav. KTU quality management system

Plan. The quality of the University's activities is linked to the successful identification of strategic priorities, the setting of appropriate objectives and the need to articulate what the specific objectives mean for the community. The mission, vision, values and general operational principles, strategic operational priorities, key performance indicators and key needs for change identified in the University's strategy provide the University's community with the guidelines to guide day-to-day activities and improvement processes. Based on the University's strategic operational documents, the University's departments prepare annual action and financial plans which describe the specific activities and/or measures planned to achieve the department's objectives, identify the expected results, plan the financial and other required resources, and assign the responsible persons. The implementation of the short-term planning process at the level of individual departments ensures not only the implementation of strategic activities, but also the identification of the quality objectives for the University's activities which are focused on the improvement of the University's internal processes and the satisfaction of the needs of stakeholders, and their integration into the department's action plan. Employees also prepare their annual activity plans (up to grade 11 job positions), taking into account the objectives and planned activities of the department. All planning processes at the University are regulated by legislation.

Do. In this phase, the implementation of quality management and operational processes takes place in three main areas of the University's activities, represented by three value chains:

- the value chain in studies, where the priorities of the implemented activities include the improvement of study programmes and processes, the continuous development of competencies in academic personnel and the modernisation of the study environment;
- the value chain in research and innovation, where the priorities of implemented activities include increasing and improving research results, building a sustainable research, experimental development and innovation ecosystem and strengthening the international project portfolio;
- the value chain in organisational development, where the priorities of the implemented activities include developing human resources, ensuring effective internal and external communication and modernising study and research infrastructure.

During the implementation phase, the tasks set out in the plans of the University, departments and individual employees are implemented within the planned timeframes and using the planned resources, and there is continuous communication and cooperation with the University's academic and non-academic community, social partners and students.

Check. The University uses defined indicators for the evaluation of activities and the achievement of results to monitor and evaluate the success of the achievement of the set objectives of the activities and the quality of the achieved results, taking into account various relevant aspects of different activities. Following the principles of transparency and smooth communication, feedback information collected through quality assurance processes is published and discussed with the University community and all stakeholders. In addition to continuous monitoring of the quality of the University's activities, the University's managers and those responsible for the implementation of internal quality processes regularly check that the quality assurance and improvement system is appropriate and in line with the fundamental principles and objectives of organisational quality management.

Act/Adjust. The results of the University's activities are analysed in terms of the management of the University's studies, research and arts and organisational activities. All decisions on quality improvement are made by the management of the University and are always based on facts, i.e., based on qualitative and/or quantitative information. The results of the performance evaluation are periodically analysed and effectively used to review and improve internal performance objectives and implementation processes. Once the necessary changes have been agreed upon and specific improvement activities are being implemented, a new cycle of PDCA is restarted, thus ensuring consistency and effectiveness of the introduced changes.

PARTICIPANTS OF THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Quality assurance and improvement are guided by the University's vision, mission, values, strategic aspirations and the operational objectives set out in the strategic plan. The University's commitment to quality assurance and continuous quality enhancement is reflected in the University's strategy and long-term action plan and as well as the priorities of all the University's value chains.

The participants of the quality management system and their responsibilities are listed in the table below.

Table. Main responsibilities of the participants of the quality management system

<u>Area of the quality management system</u>	<u>Responsible actors</u>
1. Planning	Council, Senate, rector, vice-rector for studies, vice-rector for research and innovation, director of organisational development, heads of first level departments, Strategic Development and Finance Committee.
a. strategic planning	
b. annual planning of activities of departments	
c. annual planning of activities of employees	Vice-rector for studies, vice-rector for research and innovation, director of organisational development, heads of first level departments.
2. Implementation	
a. studies and lifelong learning	
b. research and innovation	
c. organisational development	Vice-rector for studies, vice-rector for research and innovation, director of organisational development, heads of first level departments, Internal Control and Quality Committee, Internal Audit, University Study Quality Committee, Faculty Study Committees, Field's Study Programme Committees, Doctoral Committees of Fields of Science.
3. Evaluation	
a. monitoring activities and results	
b. analytics of data, processes, results	
c. internal and external evaluation	Rector, vice-rector for studies, vice-rector for research and innovation, director of organisational development, heads of first level departments.
d. control and risk management, internal audit	
4. Improvement	
a. updating strategic documents	
b. improvement of action plans	
c. development of quality improvement plans	
d. improving the efficiency of internal processes	

The rector is responsible for the quality of the University's activities, and his/her operational priorities are set by the University Council. The University Senate determines the policy of academic activities at the University, approves study programmes, research and experimental (socio-cultural) development, and art programmes, evaluates the quality and level of studies, research and artistic activities, approves the internal study quality assurance system and controls its implementation, and determines the qualification requirements for the job positions of lecturers and researchers.

The vice-rector for studies is responsible for the development of the vision, strategy and quality standard, the system of studies, is responsible for the strategy for the development of studies and manages its implementation, is responsible for the University's study programme portfolio, and formulates the study objectives for the deans. The vice-rector for research and innovation is responsible for the development of research (arts) and innovation, policy-making, doctoral studies, management of the process of research and experimental development, artistic and innovation activities at the University. Responsibility for quality assurance and quality improvement in research and experimental development rests with the deans, the directors of the science institutes, the Department of Research Affairs, the Research and Innovation Projects Centre and the National Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, according to their respective areas of responsibility. Responsibility for the overall quality management of the organisation's activities rests with the director of organisational development, as well as the director of the Department of Performance Management and the Internal Control and Quality Committee.

The deans and directors of the science institutes are responsible for the quality of the performance of the first level academic departments, the heads of the second level academic departments are responsible for the quality of the performance of their departments, and the directors of the departments,

offices and centres are responsible for the quality of the performance of non-academic departments. The heads set the direction and guidelines for improvement, initiate iterative processes to support improvement, communicate directly with stakeholders and enhance the quality culture.

At the University level, the internal monitoring of the quality of studies is carried out by the University Study Quality Committee which submits proposals and recommendations to the University's governing bodies on the development of the University's study programmes and the improvement and quality assurance of study programmes. The Study Quality Assurance and Development Office is responsible for monitoring the quality of studies at the University and submits proposals to the vice-rector for studies in the formulation of the principles for the implementation of the quality assurance policy in studies.

The Faculty Study Committees operating in the faculties submit proposals and recommendations to the dean on the development of the faculty's study programme portfolio, the formation of the study quality culture at the faculty, and provide assistance to the Field's Study Programme Committees and heads of study programmes in quality assurance in the provided study programmes. The Field's Study Programme Committees are responsible for the quality assurance of study fields and programmes.

The Doctoral Committee of Science/Artistic Field is responsible for the implementation and quality of doctoral studies in a specific science/artistic field. The academic departments involved in the process of doctoral studies and the Doctoral School also contribute to the quality of the doctoral studies.

The responsibility for quality assurance and continuous improvement rests with every member of the University community. University's employees, students, alumni, social partners and other social stakeholders are involved in quality management processes on a collaborative basis, taking responsibility for the quality of activities and developing a quality culture based on the values of the University.

