



Kemi-Tornio University  
of Applied Sciences

# Quality guide

for student

# Influence by participating

The goal of Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences (KTUAS) is the continuous improvement of the quality of its operations. To achieve this goal, a quality system of the University was created. This system provides information to support the development of operations. The quality system only works when we receive reliable feedback information of our operations, and students play a very key role as providers of feedback.



Good quality is a complex issue, but put simply it means that students are satisfied with the contents and methods of their studies, and that the skills acquired in educational establishments correspond to the needs of working life. Because the needs of working life are always changing, education must keep up with the change.

Good quality does not mean avoiding mistakes. In fact, making mistakes is human, and in order to create something new you often need to make several mistakes in order to find a new model that works. Making mistakes becomes stupidity only if you don't learn from your mistakes.



Reijo Tolppi  
*Rector*

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Editor: Anja Tuovila  
Production: KTUAS PR services

Publications of Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences  
Series C. Teaching materials 2/2012  
ISBN 978-952-5897-40-1 (pdf)  
ISSN 1799-8328

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*Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences is part of the Lapland University Consortium.*



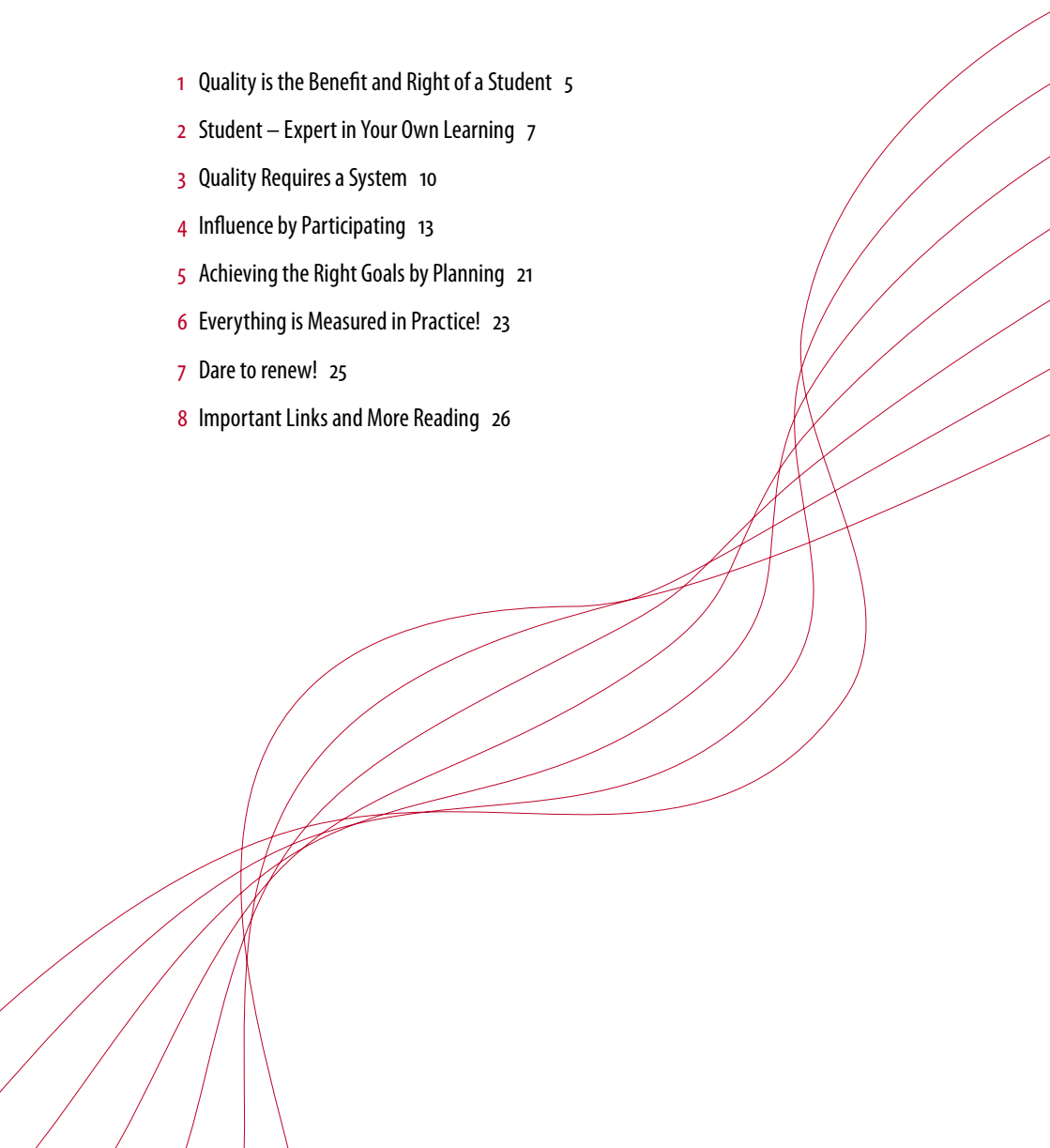
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# Quality is the Benefit and Right of a Student

# 1

You are holding a quality guide intended for students at Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences. This guide:

- describes how the quality of teaching and other activity is ensured at our University
- tells you how to participate in quality work.

A high quality education is especially important to you because it affects the progress of your studies, your ability to get a job and your success in working life. Furthermore, what is the point of studies that don't meet your needs and expectations? The student's perspective on quality is important because different people and groups in the world of higher education have differing ideas of what quality in education means.

KTUAS wants to provide you with an education that enables versatile competence, well-being and personal growth, as well as good skills for working life. From the student's perspective, *quality is the*

*demonstrated achievement of these goals, and good quality simply means satisfaction with*

- curricula and contents of studies
- teaching methods
- co-operation with working life
- practical training
- advice and guidance services

*The quality system maintains and develops operations that are consistent with these goals. By taking responsibility for your learning, giving feedback, and participating in development, you are doing your part!*



# Student – Expert in Your Own Learning

# 2

From a student's perspective, the starting point of quality is simple: the well-being of a student creates a foundation for learning and hence quality of education. The assumption is that the student has the will and ability to learn. There are many ways to learn: alone with a book, by doing with others, by practicing or by listening to lectures.

**At the heart of learning**

Even though everyone is different and learns in different ways, learning ultimately happens inside a student's head: nobody can learn for someone else. That's why it's important to evaluate your own learning and actions.

**Learn about the student's study path at [edu.tokem.fi](http://edu.tokem.fi)!**

The more aware a student is of his or her own goals, abilities and skills, the more meaningful and motivating studies and learning are. So the purpose of teaching and practicing is to find and strengthen the student's own resources and competence.

The student is not left alone. The University provides students with an environment that allows them to meet personal needs and the needs of working life. Often behind a student's success are qualified teachers and an encouraging atmosphere. Students are aided by a variety of services throughout the different phases of studies, from the tutoring and

**KTUAS is there For you**

personal study plan (PSP) to the supervision of thesis work, from health care and curator services to the leisure time activities organised by the student organisation KETOAKKU. The student's welfare, progress in studies and opportunities to influence the development of teaching are also part of quality.

**The student  
As a customer  
And a partner**

Quality can be considered from many angles. In KTUAS quality is considered from the view of stakeholders: the goal of our operations is to satisfy the needs of students and other such as working life and financiers. The students are also our *partners* who participate in the development of the University and in making decisions.

According to an evaluation team in an external audit carried out by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) in 2010, one area needing developing was the systematic familiarization of students with quality work and getting them involved in it. This kind of activity can make it easier for students to understand the importance of feedback. The quality guide you are holding is one tool for familiarization.

Students are the *best experts in their own learning*, and their feedback and participation in development provide the University with valuable information. Students aren't the only ones who have expectations with regards to the quality of education: that's why not having a student perspective can distort development.

Participating in quality work also provides skills needed in working life. Both the private and public sector are increasingly interested in maintaining and developing the quality of their operations. Quality awareness while being a student will be an asset later in working life.

**Why be interested in quality?**

# 3

## Quality Requires a System

### **Quality work is methodical and transparent**

A lot of informal quality work is done every day at KTUAS. The basis of a good quality culture is a permissive, encouraging and open atmosphere where informal discussions, feedback and brainstorming are a natural part of daily activities.

Although an encouraging atmosphere is needed for quality work, it's not enough by itself. You also need procedures that ensure the use of feedback and new ideas in the development of operations. *Good quality requires planning, systems and transparency.* Procedures that are written down are like guarantees of quality operations.

### **Quality work means continuous development**

A quality system means agreed procedure used by the University to improve operations. The quality system of KTUAS is based on the principle of continuous development. Students, staff and stakeholders provide feedback. It consists of procedures tools that produce up-to-date evaluation and monitoring data. The data make it possible to achieve common goals, maintain and develop quality continuously and to develop the quality system itself.

Our quality system is built on so called PDCA cycle (figure 1), which means that

- We plan to improve our operations first by identifying the problems and come up with ideas for solving these problems.
- We do changes to solve these problems or enhance good practices.
- We check whether the changes are achieving the desired result or not. We also check key activities to check that we know how we are doing. This ensures that we identify any new problems when they crop up.
- We act to implement the changes as a routine part of activities.

A quality system is more than the sum of its parts: it is used to develop key functions such as management, core functions and supporting processes.

The next chapter discusses the cycle of continuous development phase by phase. The tour begins with an evaluation that is important to students, and continues through continuous development and

Figure 1. KTUAS Quality assurance system.



planning toward implementation. There are tools in each phase that are used to implement the phase and link it to other phases. The table on the back cover of this guide shows specific examples of how you as a student participate in the quality work of our University.

*The quality system is published at [edu.token.fi](http://edu.token.fi)*

# Influence by Participating

# 4

Our University observes the principles of enhancement-led evaluation, the core of which is the positive and critical attitude toward your own work and that of other people. Enhancement-led evaluation takes place throughout the entire learning process, guiding people's activities.

Evaluation is enhancing when it ties the evaluation of an activity to its active development. All of the development phases of the activity are evaluated. The purpose of enhancement-led development is the active development of operations, in this case learning and teaching.

Thus properly given evaluation is constructive and accurate. Remember also to give praise for good practices. This ensures the continuation of good practices and their use in other study modules. Evaluation that corresponds to reality is worth gold because it allows development and planning to be based on reality. *When you give instructive evaluation, you are doing your part to influence the quality of teaching!*

*Don't be satisfied with providing feedback only at the end of the study module, give it whenever it's needed!*

**Path of feedback** An essential part of enhancement-led evaluation is the feedback given by our students.

Figure 2 shows the path of feedback. Feedback is the basis for developing and planning the operations of the University to meet the needs of students. The University's quality team develops feedback systems and provides information on quality work, and student members also participate in its work.

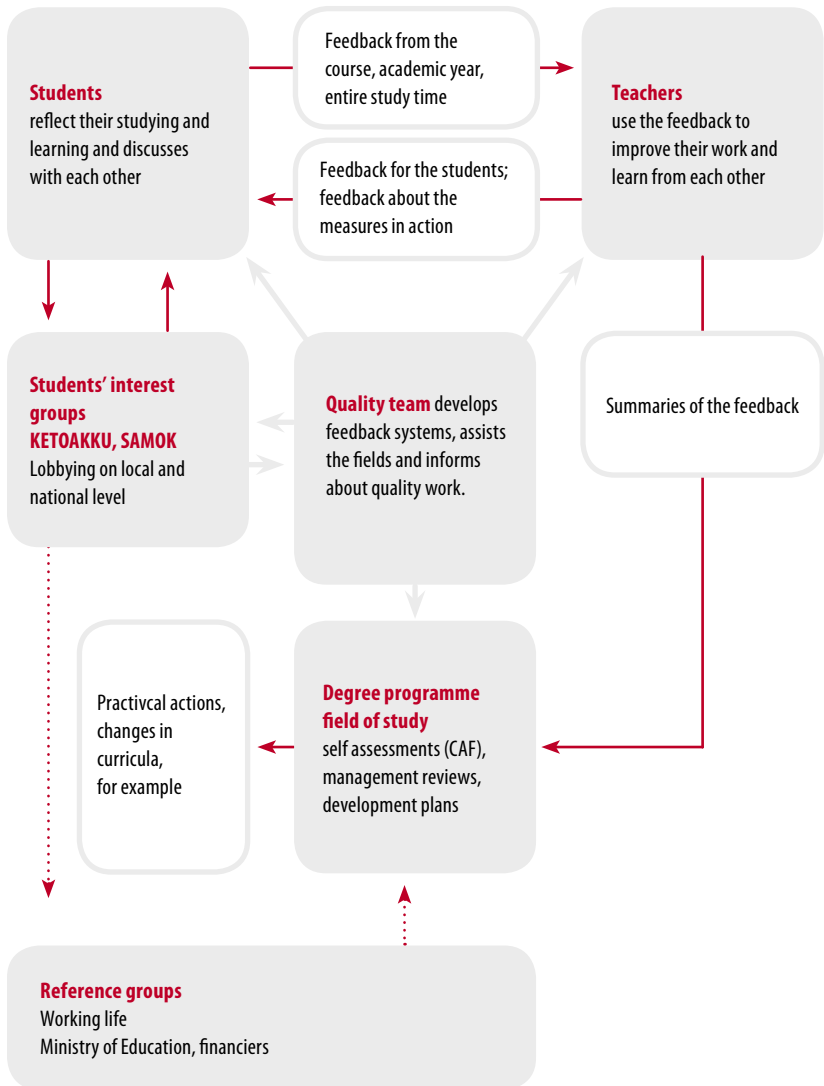
**Giving feedback is quality work** Give feedback

- of study modules in WinhaOpaali
- of academic year to tutor teacher
- OPALA feedback for the whole study time
- of support services

See more at [edu.tokem.fi](http://edu.tokem.fi)



Figure 2. Course of Feedback



Study module feedback is designed to evaluate the contents, teaching methods and load of the study module, as well as on learning during the study module. *Don't be satisfied with providing feedback only at the end of the study module, give it whenever it's needed!* WinhaOpaali is the main feedback channel. Other ways to give feedback exist, and the method of feedback available is agreed during each study module.

The academic year feedback is collected annually on the year's curricula, teaching contents, teaching methods, study guidance, students' possibilities to influence, interaction of teaching and research, development and innovation activity (RDI), the connections of the University to working life, internationalisation and study support services.

Students also give an Opala assessment of their studies when graduating. In addition, you can use the electronic feedback form of [edu.token.fi](http://edu.token.fi) to give feedback and to make an initiative.

The student feedback system OPALA is a joint uniform system of universities of applied sciences and the Ministry of Education and Culture for collecting student feedback. It is used to collect up-to-date data on the employment of graduates of universities of applied sciences and information on how education and practical training have succeeded in the opinions of students.

**Why Opala feedback is important**

The Ministry of Education and Culture utilises the student feedback in assessing education, in comparing universities of applied sciences and field.

*See summary reports of Opala feedback at [opala.pkamk.fi](http://opala.pkamk.fi)*

Universities of applied sciences use the feedback for developing the education and practical training of different fields of study and study programmes, as well as for comparing the student feedback of other universities of applied sciences.

Every bit of feedback given by each graduating student is important to us, as our response rate in 2011 was 86 % and in 2010 as high as 94 %.

Table 1. Average answers of graduates of Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences for 2011 (satisfaction on scale of 0-5)

	Counselling and guidance services	Teaching is competent and of a high level	Guidance in practical training is sufficient	Tasks during practical training have supported learning
Culture	3,02 (-0,01)*	2,80 (+0,09)	3,00 (+0,23)	3,49 (+0,12)
Social Sciences, Business and Administration	3,09 (+0,35)	2,93 (+0,12)	3,28 (+0,15)	3,15 (+0,27)
Natural Sciences	3,44 (+0,39)	3,19 (+0,09)	3,29 (+0,16)	3,29 (+0,01)
Technology and Transportation	2,91 (+0,17)	2,96 (+0,12)	3,06 (+0,43)	2,99 (+0,26)
Social Services, Health and Physical Education	3,07 (+0,13)	3,09 (+0,08)	3,28 (+0,01)	3,46 (+0,04)

*\*trend compared to previous year in parenthesis*

According to the table, the greatest increase was in the average values of the sufficiency of guidance in practical training. The second highest improvement was in the average values of counselling and guidance services in the fields of natural sciences, social sciences, business and administration.

**Influence by participating**

KTUAS wants to inspire students to get involved in the development of the University. Student members already participate in decision-making and preparation, for example in a variety of working groups on the University Board. A group that is

important to quality work is the quality team. Students' own organisations, such as the student union KETOAKKU and the student associations of the units, contribute to the quality work of education.

Students play a big role in the evaluation of quality in fields of study and of quality assurance. Students participate in self evaluations and internal audit processes. The purpose of these is to evaluate the operations of the field of study and support and boost development work.

**Evaluation considers the whole**

External evaluation provides us with independent information on the state of the University and development needs. *The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC)* audits and evaluates all of the quality systems of Finland's institutions of higher learning. The goal of the auditing is to determine the qualitative objectives set by the institutions, and evaluate how it maintains and develops the quality of its operation and the functionality of its quality assurance system. These audits do not measure the quality of operations, only how well the quality system works. Students also play an important role in external audits as providers of feedback.

**External evaluation is also needed**

The first audit of KTUAS's quality system was conducted in spring 2010. The University passed the audit and received the appropriate quality label that is valid for the next six years. You can read the audit report and the highlighted strengths of our

University, good practices and recommendations for development at [http://www.kka.fi/files/1146/KKA\\_1410.pdf](http://www.kka.fi/files/1146/KKA_1410.pdf) (with English abstract).

### **KETOAKKU**

KETOAKKU is the student union of KTUAS. It represents students and is responsible for looking after their interests. The mission of KETOAKKU is to bring the students' viewpoint to the decision-making of the University and support students in issues related to studying. KETOAKKU is a member of the Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences SAMOK. Read more at <http://edu3.tokem.fi/ketoakku> and [www.samok.fi](http://www.samok.fi).

### **Associations for departments**

In addition to KETOAKKU, every unit of the University has its own student association that represents a department. They provide guidance for questions related to their own department and organise student tutoring. The department associations are TOKKO ry, the Association of Culture and Business Students in Tornio, *Kemin kauppaopiskelijat ry* (Kemi Business Students), Student Association of Social Services KETOSOK, Student Association of the department of Health Care KETOTERVE, and *Kemin insinöörioppilaat KeIO ry* (Kemi Engineering Students). Go to [edu.tokem.fi/english](http://edu.tokem.fi/english) for more information.

# Achieving the Right Goals by Planning

# 5

A quality system is based on planning, especially on a long-term plan or *strategy*. Our strategy includes goals related to students, such as enhancing the teaching and learning process, improving the interaction between learning and working life, and benefitting from internationalisation and the ability of students to innovate.

**Strategy aims at goals**

The basis of the strategy is our *mission* and *vision*. The mission means a clarification of the purpose of our operation, while the vision says where we want to be in a few years time.

*Read about the core parts of the University's strategy at [www.tokem.fi](http://www.tokem.fi)*

## **Mission**

Kemi-Tornio UAS is a competent educator and developer.

## **Vision 2012**

We are an expert that is nationally and internationally respected in our strategic fields of expertise as a part of the Lapland University Consortium. Our strength is based on high-level expertise and recognised, innovative know-how.

Values guide all of the operations of the University. Values are the permanent building material of a community, the undertone in all its activities. *Operations that are consistent with commonly agreed values are the goal and mission of the entire University community, both students and staff.*

The **values** of Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences are

**Expertise** and **wisdom** means recognition of the customer or student and his or her needs. Expertise and wisdom also means highlighting collaboration and shared expertise, understanding the uniqueness of an individual as a resource, and taking responsibility for common goals.

**Creativity** and **courage** means the courage to take on challenges that enhance the know-how of society and the region as well as develop local business activity. Searching for innovations and supporting continuous learning at the individual and collective level represents curious creativity at its best.

**Credibility** and **trust** refers to compliance with agreed divisions of tasks, agreements and commonly agreed rules. We are consistent in all operations and decision-making, and everyone is treated equally regardless of age, sex, status, nationality and education.



# Everything is Measured in Practice!

# 6

The functions of our University of applied sciences are described as processes. The most important processes, are called *core processes*.

## Core processes

- teaching and learning and
- research, development and innovation activity
- regional development

Teaching and learning are part of the everyday life of a student. Research, development and innovation activity, for their part, improve the student's working life skills. From the student's perspective, regional and working life collaboration means practical training in local businesses and public sector organisations, theses in the form of projects, and various other projects.

*Support processes* are needed in everyday life; they make the implementation of core processes possible. They too are an essential part of the student's everyday life.

### Support processes

*Student services* play an essential role in a University student's life starting with the application phase. The services include student allowances, curator services, tutoring and other student's welfare services.

**eLearning** is responsible for organising Internet-based learning environments at KTUAS, as well as related support services.

**Library services** are mostly services related to reading material, but library services also include acquisitions and informaticist services. Feedback on library services can be given at [edu.token.fi](http://edu.token.fi) → library and information services → praises and complaints

**International services** become useful when you want to become an exchange student. They handle the practical arrangements related to exchange studies and international practical training, and they provide guidance on being an exchange student. The international unit also co-ordinates friend family activity.

**IT services** make sure that the information technology services work.

Other support processes include **administrative services, communication services** and **property services**.

**Do our processes work?** A quality education requires processes that function properly and meet the objectives set. Processes form the core of the University community, so for students it is critical that they work. The effectiveness of processes is also evaluated in feedback. Processes ensure that actions taken at the University are consistent and goal-oriented.

# Dare to renew!

Continuous development implies that quality work is always ongoing, and the quality assurance system is never completed. There's always something to improve and new, better ways to achieve common goals. Quality doesn't necessarily mean perfection, but rather learning from mistakes.

Continuous development and quality assurance enables the achievement of goals. The purpose of quality assurance is to help students succeed in their studies, to support their well-being and to get a job after graduation. This requires continuous interaction and dialogue between students, staff and stakeholders. The student's own activeness in giving feedback is an important part of developing the University.

# 8

## Important Links and More Reading

At [edu.tokem.fi](http://edu.tokem.fi) you can find important information about quality. There are also links for giving feedback through WinhaOpaali and OPALA. You will also find our entire quality system from there.

**Paketti Bolognese** (SAMOK 2004) contains information on the Bologna Process and the quality of institutions of higher learning. The brochure is available electronically at [www.samok.fi](http://www.samok.fi) → julkaisut → Paketti Bolognese. SAMOK's website also provides other important information relevant to students.

**The website of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC)** <http://www.kka.fi/> → In English contains the premises of their evaluation, and audit reports of other institutions of higher learning. The website also has other interesting publications.

**KTUAS' audit report** [www.kka.fi/files/1146/KKA\\_1410.pdf](http://www.kka.fi/files/1146/KKA_1410.pdf)

## Cycle of continuous improvement of operations from a student's perspective

<p><b>Act</b></p> <p>The student participates in personal and communal development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A personal development plan = continuous evaluation and development of personal study plan, PSP, and RPL (recognition of prior learning).</li><li>• Participates in carrying out the development ideas and suggestions for improvement that are created on the basis of feedback</li></ul>	<p><b>Plan</b></p> <p>The student participates in creating the plans listed below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RSP (personal study plan) and RPL (recognition of prior learning)</li><li>• curricula</li><li>• plans for the academic year</li><li>• implementation plans for study modules</li></ul>
<p><b>Check</b></p> <p>Students give feedback using the following feedback methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• study module feedback (for theoretical studies and practical training)</li><li>• semester/academic year feedback</li><li>• OPALA feedback</li><li>• feedback on functionality of support services</li><li>• other feedback</li></ul>	<p><b>Do</b></p> <p>Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is responsible for achieving set learning objectives in the teaching and learning processes</li><li>• participates in the guidance process of studies</li><li>• does his or her part to ensure the implementation of the integration process between teaching and RDI activity</li><li>• uses the educational support services to achieve learning goals</li><li>• acts in accordance with values and common rules</li></ul>



## Quality is...

...achieving common goals.

...giving feedback.

...evaluation and development.

...acting according to common values.

...participating in quality work.