

Teacher of the Year 2025: Petra Pekkanen

Petra Pekkanen has been selected as LUT University's *Teacher of the Year 2025*. She teaches the **Workshop Course of Management and Leadership Skills (6 ECTS)**, which is part of the **MSc programme in Digital Service Engineering** in the in Industrial Engineering and Management Degree Programme. The selection is based on course feedback given by students.

The course supports reflective learning and collective thinking

Petra Pekkanen has delivered the course several times, and over the years the implementation has been refined into a well-functioning whole appreciated by both students and the teacher alike. In the 2025 implementation, 35 master's students participated in the course, a group size that enables genuine interaction and a workshop-based approach. Petra considers herself privileged to teach highly motivated students who are strongly committed to their studies in the course. She also believes that such courses—which are relatively small and interactive and focus on reflecting on and deepening one's own expertise—are exactly what master's-level studies should include.

"I find it important that all students have opportunities for genuine pedagogical interaction with us teachers as well as with one another," she summarizes.

A clear structure and good organization help focusing on learning

In their feedback, students especially praise the course for its:

- clear structure and good organization,
- consistent guidance and scheduling,
- agreed course rules and commitment to them,
- diverse content that stimulates discussion and supports self-reflection.

The course makes use of a wide range of materials to spark discussion and inspire learning, including case examples, videos, tests, and workplace analyses. Experiential learning and discussion are an essential part of the learning process, and students invest a great deal of effort in completing the course.

Interactivity is the key to effective online teaching

In the feedback, students describe the course as an exceptionally well-designed and inspiring learning experience, strongly supported by a high-quality and well-structured Moodle platform. The workshop-based format, diverse teaching methods, small-group work, and reflective assignments are considered particularly valuable. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the course has been delivered entirely online via Teams. Attendance in online sessions is, however, mandatory. Petra Pekkanen notes that the online implementation works very well for the course.

Petra says that she genuinely enjoys teaching, especially the interactive nature of this course:

“Students really throw themselves into this course and courageously bring their own experiences into the discussions. That makes each implementation unique and inspiring.”

Recognition for high-quality, long-term work

When awarding Petra Pekkanen as LUT’s Teacher of the Year, Vice Rector Sandström states:

“Petra’s teaching is an example of how a clear pedagogical structure and genuine interaction together can create an impactful learning experience. She inspires students and supports their growth as future experts and leaders.”

Petra Pekkanen has also served for a long time as the head of the degree programmes in Industrial Engineering and Management, a role through which she influences the quality of education across the entire degree programme, beyond her own courses.

“The excellent feedback from students provides confidence to steer education in industrial engineering and management along the path of continuous improvement and to support colleagues in their demanding teaching work,” Sandström concludes.



Photo: Teacher of the Year 2025, Petra Pekkanen and vice-rector Jaana Sandström