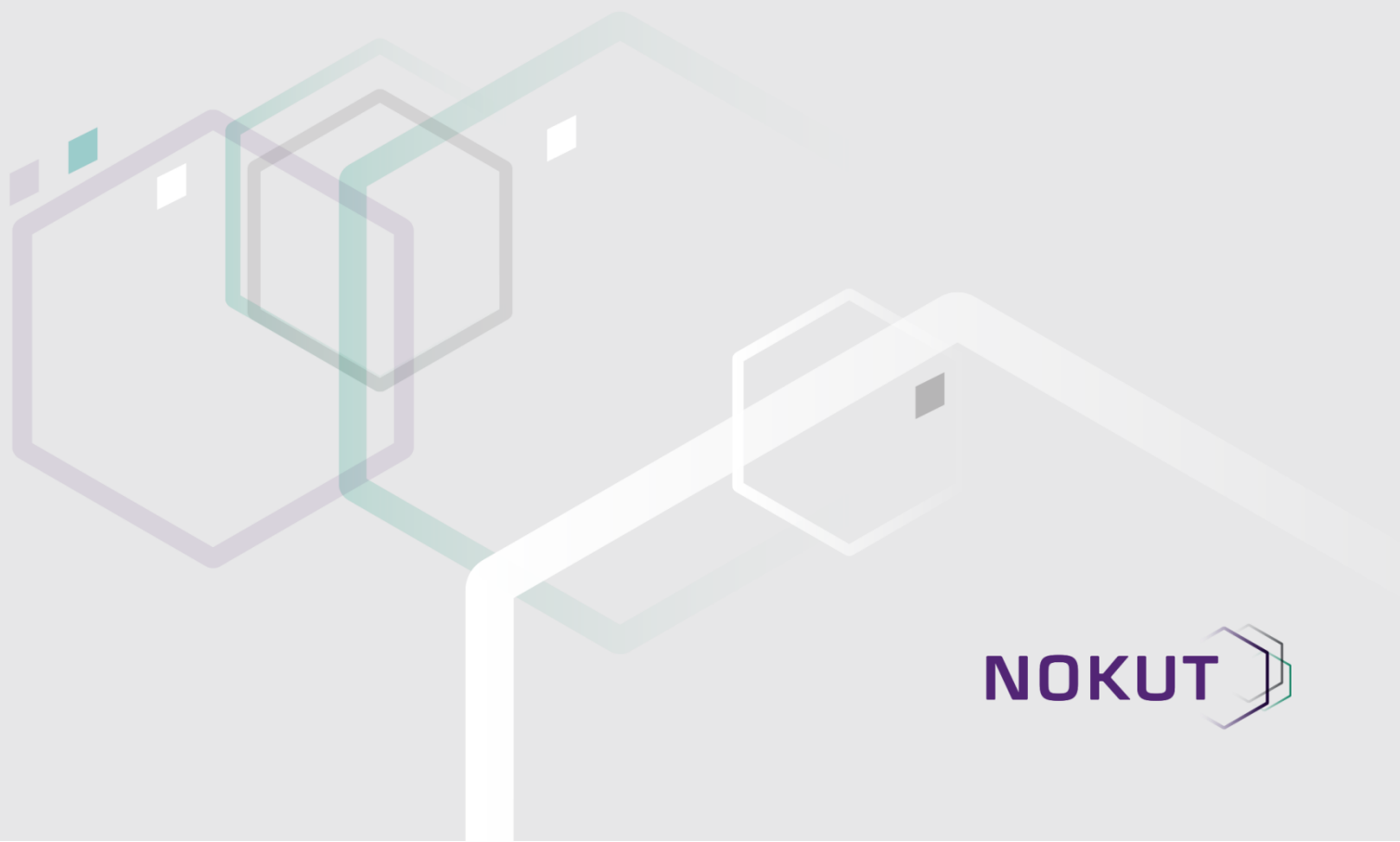


NOKUT's evaluations

Educational quality in political science in Norway

Joint evaluations of research and education

2018



NOKUT 

NOKUT's work shall contribute to public confidence in the quality of both Norwegian higher and vocational education, as well as certified higher education from abroad. «NOKUT's evaluations» are expert assessments describing the state of affairs within academic disciplines and fields, as well as central common aspects of education relevant for different disciplines and fields.

We hope that the results will prove useful for higher education institutions in their programme-related quality assurance and development work.

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Foreword

In September 2014, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research commissioned the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) and the Research Council of Norway (RCN) to develop a model for joint evaluations of research and education in Norway. NOKUT and RCN took the opportunity of RCN's planned evaluation of Norwegian social science research to test the model. This resulted in three overlapping sets of evaluations of social sciences in Norway: a research evaluation, an education evaluation, and an evaluation of the interplay between research and education. Together, they form the joint evaluation of research and education. The first aim of the joint evaluation pilot project is to develop a model that will allow NOKUT and RCN to assess the quality of education and research and the link between them in the years to come. Since this model was tested in the social sciences, the second aim is to improve the knowledge of the current state of Norwegian social science research and education.

The education evaluation is a pilot project, and as such, one of its aims is to test out a new model for independently exploring and evaluating central aspects of educational quality in higher education. The evaluation also aims to improve the public's, the institutions', and the government's knowledge of the current state of social sciences education in Norway, and to give the institutions that took part individual feedback from experts in the field in order to enhance their educations further. More broadly, by attending to the current state of social sciences education, the issue of what helps and hinders it, and the question of how to improve it further, the evaluation aims to contribute to making educational quality a high priority in Norwegian higher education.

NOKUT developed a new evaluation model for the education evaluation in conjunction with the joint evaluation of research and education. A reference group of Norwegian academics supported this work. While the RCN's corresponding research evaluation targets six social science disciplines in Norway, the education evaluation covers three of these: political science, sociology, and economics. The decision to limit the education evaluation to these three disciplines was a pragmatic one: they are the largest social science disciplines in Norway, they are taught at different types of higher education institutions, and they are large international disciplines, making it possible to recruit international experts to the discipline panels.

Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Higher Education, Oslo, Norway provided scientific and project management support to the panels in education evaluations.

NOKUT would like to thank the participating programmes, experts and NIFU for their contributions to the project.

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1 Introduction

1.1 The mandate and aims of the education evaluation

This report describes the evaluation of educational quality in the discipline of political science in Norway. This is one of three *discipline evaluations*, along with sociology and economics, which make up *the education evaluation of social sciences*. In turn, the education evaluation is part of the larger pilot project *joint evaluations of research and education*. This section briefly describes the mandate and aims of each of these.

The joint evaluation of research and education: In September 2014, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research commissioned the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) and the Research Council of Norway (RCN) to develop a model for joint evaluations of research and education in Norway. NOKUT and RCN took the opportunity of RCN's planned evaluation of Norwegian social science research to test the model. This resulted in three overlapping sets of evaluations of social sciences in Norway: a research evaluation, an education evaluation, and an evaluation of the interplay between research and education. Together, they form the *joint evaluation of research and education*. The first aim of the joint evaluation pilot project is to develop a model that will allow NOKUT and RCN to assess the quality of education and research and the link between them in the years to come. Since this model was tested in the social sciences, the second aim is to improve the knowledge of the current state of Norwegian social science research and education.

The education evaluation of social sciences: The education evaluation is a pilot project, and as such, one of its aims is to test out a new model for independently exploring and evaluating central aspects of educational quality in higher education. The evaluation also aims to improve the public's, the institutions', and the government's knowledge of the current state of social sciences education in Norway, and to give the institutions that took part individual feedback from experts in the field in order to enhance their educations further. More broadly, by attending to the current state of social sciences education, the issue of what helps and hinders it, and the question of how to improve it further, the evaluation aims to contribute to making educational quality a high priority in Norwegian higher education.

This report describes the education evaluation of the discipline of political science.

1.2 Education evaluation model

The model for the education evaluation was developed by NOKUT, in conjunction with the joint evaluation of research and education. A reference group of Norwegian academics supported this work. While the RCN's corresponding research evaluation targets six social science disciplines in Norway, the education evaluation covers three of these: political science, sociology, and economics. The decision to limit the education evaluation to these three disciplines was a pragmatic one: they are the largest social science disciplines in Norway, they are taught at different types of higher education institutions, and they are large international disciplines, making it possible to recruit international experts to the discipline panels.

All Norwegian higher education institutions offering study programmes in political science, sociology and economics were invited to participate in the education evaluation, and ten universities and university colleges chose to participate across the three panels. In total, 59 study programmes were included, distributed across three levels: bachelor programmes, MA programmes, and Ph.D. programmes. Sociology was represented with 24 programmes, political science with 19, and economics with 16. In total, ten Ph.D. programmes were submitted across the three panels. However, as very little specific data was available for the Ph.D. level, the education evaluation focuses primarily on the BA and MA level.

As participation was optional, not all existing study programmes chose to be included in the evaluation; this was especially the case for programmes with a multidisciplinary profile. While this limits the scope of the evaluation somewhat, the evaluation does cover the core educational offer within all three disciplines. At the same time, this implies that the overall assessments by the panels cover the programmes assessed, rather than a comprehensive view of the situation of educational provision in these three disciplines in Norway.

In line with NOKUT's commitment to peer review in external quality assurance, the education evaluation was assigned to a group of international experts forming three discipline panels. The international experts recruited to take part as panel members are active researchers, and have longstanding experience in educational leadership and teaching at university level.

1.2.1 Quality dimensions

The education evaluation draws on NOKUT's policy document 'Quality areas for study programmes' (2016). The document outlines NOKUT's approach to the factors necessary to create high quality study programmes in higher education, centring on eight connected quality areas: knowledge base, initial competence, learning trajectory, learning outcomes, educational competence, learning environment, interaction with society and the workplace, and programme design and programme leadership. NOKUT's approach to quality in study programmes is process- rather than results-oriented, based on the idea that the results of any learning process will usually depend heavily on each student's ability, motivation and effort. Thus, the final results of an educational process are not on their own evidence enough to determine an institution's educational quality. When evaluating educational quality, NOKUT emphasises the ways in which institutions create conditions for learning more strongly than the learning outcomes themselves. This education evaluation follows this ethos.

Drawing on this policy document and on discussions with the reference group, NOKUT landed on nine dimensions to use as indicators of educational quality for the evaluation:

- Initial competence
- Programme design
- Teaching and assessment methods
- Learning environment in study programmes
- Educational competence
- Achieved learning
- Internationalisation
- Relevance

- Educational leadership

Table 1 presents the different dimensions, and shows how the evaluation made use of them.

Supplement 1 ('Survey form') shows the relationship between quality dimensions, the questions the evaluation aimed to answer, and the evidence used to answer each question.

Quality dimension	Definition
Initial competence	<p>The prior knowledge that the student brings to the start of the programme, as well as other qualities like motivation, experience and ability, are what we call the student's initial competence. Initial competence is not just a measure of the student's general level of competence when starting a higher education programme. It also has to do with how far this competence is appropriate to the programme in question, and with the student's motivation for choosing this education. A good study programme will make active efforts to recruit a diverse student body, composed of students with the right initial competence, who are highly motivated to undertake the programme.</p> <p>A successful study start also requires good admissions procedures and clear information before the study programme begins, and requires both a social and an academic welcome process. A good study start helps students develop motivation and good learning strategies.</p> <p><u>The education evaluation asks the following questions on initial competence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do students who start the programme have the initial competence that will enable them to complete it successfully? • To what extent do institutions and study programmes provide early programme activities to prepare new students for the demands of higher education?
Programme design	<p>A good programme design unites many of the factors that contribute to good learning and to students' achieving learning outcomes. Designing a programme is a complex task that requires good educational management, as well as input from students, academic and administrative staff, support services, professional organisations, and the wider society. For a programme design to be successful, it needs a clear division of responsibility for everyone involved, and a sound basis in pedagogy and subject didactics.</p> <p>A well-designed study programme contains good and relevant learning outcome descriptions that are at the right level of the national qualifications framework, and that are adapted to the distinctive nature of the discipline. The learning outcome descriptions correspond to the teaching and assessment methods used. A well-designed study programme contributes to improve student learning, creates close links between research and teaching, and contributes to effective administration. Periodic assessment of study programmes means that the programmes, and other factors that play into students' learning trajectories, continually improve. Such assessments help to ensure that the programme and the students' learning correspond to the needs of both the student and society.</p> <p><u>The education evaluation asks the following questions on programme design:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well are the programmes designed? • Are courses well connected and do they create a coherent whole? • Do the different courses allow students to learn what is expected based on the described learning outcomes?

Teaching and assessment methods	<p>The quality of teaching and assessment methods has great importance for the quality of students' learning. A good teacher is able to use student interaction to motivate and inspire students to learn. When students take part in shaping the teaching and learning methods used, they are likely to feel more in charge of their own learning trajectory.</p> <p><u>The education evaluation asks the following questions on teaching and assessment methods:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there coherence between course content, teaching methods, and assessment methods? • Do programmes use varied and appropriate teaching and assessment methods?
Learning environment in study programmes	<p>A learning environment is the sum of all factors that affect students' physical and mental well-being and their ability to learn. A learning environment is composed of physical, organisational and psychosocial factors. NOKUT uses the term 'learning environment' to describe how these factors affect not only student welfare, but also learning, student involvement, student democracy, and student ownership of learning. Physical surroundings affect learning. A good learning environment facilitates and provides training in forms of teaching and assessment beyond the traditional lecture/classroom model. Changing the physical environment and teaching methods can often make it easier to introduce aspects of research in learning. In this way, the physical premises can help transform the content of a programme. Even early-stage learning can become more project- and collaboration-oriented, with a work flow more similar to what students will encounter in research projects as well as in their future work. A good learning environment involves practical application of teaching and assessment methods other than traditional lectures/classroom-based teaching, like flipped classrooms, problem-based learning, team teaching, courses in debate, drama or role-play, learning workshops, and learning by doing.</p> <p><u>The education evaluation asks the following questions on learning environment in study programmes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are students satisfied with the social environment? • Are students satisfied with the academic environment? • Are students satisfied with the physical infrastructure? • To what extent are students engaged academically beyond the regular programme plan?
Educational competence	<p>Educational competence means being able to adapt aspects of an academic field to create a course of study that has a relevant profile and is pitched at the right level. For educators, a good basic level of educational competence is a starting point for further development and qualification, and subject and programme leaders have a responsibility to ensure that this happens. Teachers also depend on their colleagues and academic community to discuss and help evaluate their teaching.</p> <p><u>The education evaluation asks the following questions on educational competence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are instructors encouraged to develop their own didactic/pedagogical competence? • How important is teaching ability relative to research in hiring decisions?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the institution working effectively to increase the status of teaching?
Achieved learning	<p>Achieved learning is a difficult quality dimension to get to grips with, in particular because it cannot be reduced to grades alone. Not only do final grades never fully represent student learning, but grading can also vary from institution to institution (cf. the 2017 UHR report ‘Karakterbruk i UH-sektoren 2016’), and achieved grades can reveal as much about the student’s initial competence as about the quality of their education. With this in mind, the evaluation did not aim to supply full evidence of achieved learning, but focused only on two roughly indicative aspects: student satisfaction with their own learning, and the relationship between students’ self-reported workload and achieved grades. While neither of these aspects can give a full sense of what students have learned, they can give a general idea of where potential issues may lie.</p> <p><u>The education evaluation asks the following questions on achieved learning:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are students satisfied with the outcomes of their learning processes? • Is there coherence or discrepancy between students’ workload and grades?
Internationalisation	<p>In higher education, internationalisation is the integration of an international, intercultural and global dimension in the goals, organisation and actions of the higher education sector (cf. St.mld. 14 (2008-2009), ‘Internasjonalisering av utdanning’). For a given study programme this can involve a range of practices, including student and staff exchange programmes, courses conducted in languages other than Norwegian, the recruitment of international staff and students, and the use of international syllabus texts. Since different disciplines and study programmes will benefit from internationalisation in different ways and to different degrees, the evaluation question for this dimension is very open.</p> <p><u>The education evaluation asks the following question on internationalisation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If relevant, does the use of internationalisation enhance each student’s education?

Relevance	<p>Study programmes should be relevant in the sense of providing the competence society needs now and in the future, and in the sense of allowing students to gain knowledge and skills they will need in their future learning and working lives. Conversely, higher education institutions, academic staff and students can stimulate societal innovation by spreading knowledge of the most recent developments in relevant academic fields. Forums for interacting with the professional field can contribute to making study programmes more relevant and flexible. Where appropriate, these forums should have influence over both programme portfolios and the content of individual study programmes. Each academic community needs to consider how and how far such contact can help improve its study programmes. Collaboration with society and working life might involve, for instance, the use of teachers from outside the university, periods of practical training, specific course components addressing topics in the professional field, or MA and BA theses conducted in collaboration with the professional field.</p> <p><u>The education evaluation asks the following question on relevance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the study programme use means appropriate to the subject to help students develop skills that are relevant to their future lives, study, and employment?
Educational leadership	<p>Facilitating others' learning is a demanding task that not only requires academic and didactic competence, but also depends on good educational leadership. Good educational leadership is here understood as being involved in the development of study programmes, ensuring sufficient resources to all study programmes, and monitoring the study programmes at the institution.</p> <p><u>The education evaluation asks the following questions on educational leadership:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is academic management at different levels involved with the development of study programmes? • How does the academic leadership ensure that educational resources are available and that study programmes make good use of them?

Table 1: Definition of quality dimensions

1.3 Data and tools

1.3.1 Data

The educational quality dimensions above guided NOKUT's selection of relevant data for the evaluation. Before the start of the evaluation process, NOKUT compiled the data and distributed them to the panels via an online portal. The panels based their evaluations on the following material:

- **Descriptive information about study programmes**

NOKUT provided links to the institutions' webpages containing descriptions of the participating study programmes, their structure, the formal requirements and entry score for admission, course outlines, and expected learning outcomes.

- **Institutional self-assessment**

The institutions' self-assessments provided important information for many of the qualitative indicators (cf. 1.2). The statements in the self-assessment reports were intended to reflect the education quality dimensions (see supplement 2, 'Institutional self-assessment form').

- **National student surveys**

Aggregated results from the 2014-2016 NOKUT student survey (Studiebarometeret¹) were made available to the panels. NOKUT's annual survey provides information on how students perceive the quality of the study programme they attend. The data are divided between bachelor and master levels. The survey is distributed annually to second-year bachelor-students, to second-year master students, and to fifth-year students in integrated master's degree programmes. The survey includes questions on various aspects of their study programmes. Students rate the quality of these aspects on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest level of satisfaction and 1 the lowest. In addition, students are asked to report the weekly hours they spend on learning activities organised by the institution, and on individual studies.¹

- **National statistics on higher education**

The Database for Statistics on Higher Education (Database for høgere utdanning, DBH) provided additional statistics to support the panels' assessments of educational quality. These statistics included intake requirements, numbers of applicants for the study programmes, and enrolment capacity. Numbers are from the 2015 enrolment call, or 2016 when available.²

- **Report from university pedagogy experts**

A group of international experts in higher education pedagogy were asked to use the same data and assessment tools as the panels themselves to evaluate the pedagogical quality of each discipline at individual institutions, and describe patterns of pedagogical quality in the discipline as a whole across the participating institutions. Their evaluations covered the four quality dimensions most closely related to pedagogy: programme design, teaching and assessment methods, educational competence, and research orientation in teaching methods and assessment. These reports formed an additional, pedagogy-specific perspective and source of information for the panels to draw on in their own assessments.

- **Additional data**

After the initial panel meetings, panels were asked for feedback on the process so far, and given the opportunity to request additional data sources. In response, NOKUT provided additional analyses based on statistics from the national database (DBH, Database for statistikk om høyere utdanning), and a set of follow-up questions were sent to the institutions. These follow-up questions differed between programmes, and were intended to clarify any unclear points in the original self-assessments.

Some of the requests for additional data by the panel members were not possible to address, either because such data is not available, or not feasible for NOKUT to acquire within the evaluation time frame.

¹ www.studiebarometeret.no/en

² <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/nokutportal>

1.3.2 Assessment tools

The experts were provided with a grading scale intended to ensure a similar starting point for evaluating each quality dimension and the overall quality of education within one discipline for each participating institution. The numeric grades are, however, not reproduced in this report. Instead, the experts provide substantial reasoning in the form of a written statement for each quality dimension, for the overall quality of education for each institution, and for the quality of education in the discipline on a national level. The experts were also asked to provide recommendations for how to enhance the quality of education at an institutional and national level.

1.4 Review process

1.4.1 Secretariat

The Research Council in cooperation with NOKUT commissioned NIFU, Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Higher Education, Oslo, Norway, to provide scientific and project management support to the panels in the research and education evaluations.

1.4.2 The panels' work process

All panels started their work in May 2017. Each panel held three meetings with the panel participants, panel secretary and a representative from NOKUT. The panel in political science had three two-day meetings, in May, September and December of 2017. Between these three meetings, panel members worked individually and communicated primarily by email. The panel also used a web portal for the distribution of data for the assessment, draft assessments, as well as other relevant information.

Before the panels first met in May 2017, NOKUT collected and prepared data packages for each of the institutions who chose to participate in the evaluation (including the self-assessments, information from national student survey (Studiebarometeret), and descriptive information on the study programmes, see point 1.3.1 for more information). Given that the panels requested additional data, NOKUT provided additional statistical overview from the national database (DBH, Database for statistikk om høyere utdanning), qualitative information about the Norwegian higher education system, and a set of follow-up questions were sent to the institutions after summer (see point 1.3.1 for more information). The pedagogical report was supplemented to the assessment process in November 2017.

The political science panel distributed the responsibility for writing the institutional assessments among individual panel members. Each institution was comprehensively discussed during the meetings on multiple occasions, with collaborative examination of data sources, discussion of the assessment content and the specific statements in the report. During the last meeting, each of the quality dimensions was discussed across multiple institutions. The overall report was completed in January 2018.

1.5 Political Science evaluation

1.5.1 Members of the panel

The political science panel consists of five members, led by Professor Anne Skorkjær Binderkrantz.

Panel chair Anne Skorkjær Binderkrantz, Aarhus University (Denmark)

Binderkrantz is professor of political science and the head of studies at the Department of Political Science, Aarhus University. Her teaching experience includes lectures and seminars at various educational levels and is related to both substantive issues and methods. She has supervised a large number of MA students as well as six doctoral students. Her main research interests are related to political elites, interest groups, lobbying, media representation, and public governance.

Panel member Niels van Willigen, Leiden University, the Netherlands

Van Willigen is associate professor of international relations. He has taught in international relations at all levels and has extensive supervision experience of Bachelor, Master and PhD theses. His main research interests include theories of international relations, foreign policy analysis and security studies (in particular peace operations, arms control and European security).

Panel member Elin Wihlborg, Linköping University, Sweden

Wihlborg is professor of political science. She has a PhD in technology and social change. Her teaching experience includes both substantive issues and methods in political science and related social sciences. She has been programme manager for the MA-programme and supervised a large number of MA-students and seven PhD students. Her main research interests are public administration, local governance and digital government.

Panel member Magnus Feldmann, University of Bristol, UK

Feldmann is senior lecturer in politics. His main teaching experience includes international and comparative political economy, comparative politics and research design. He is currently teaching courses on dissertation writing, states and markets and Russian politics. Feldmann has supervised and examined PhD theses, and he also has extensive experience of supervising and assessing student research at the Bachelor's and Master's level. Feldmann has served two terms (2010-18) as the programme censor for the MA in comparative politics at the University of Bergen. His main research interests are primarily focused on comparative and international politics.

Panel member Jonas Hinnfors, Gothenburg University, Sweden

Hinnfors is professor of political science. He has taught comparative politics in Gothenburg at all levels, and party systems in a comparative perspective on advanced levels at the University of Stirling, Scotland. He has extensive supervision experience, and has supervised 14 PhD students. His research interests include social democracy, migration policy, parties/party behaviour, ideology, and welfare state.

The panel's work was supported by panel secretary senior researcher Mari Elken (NIFU). From NOKUT, Åsne Kalland Aarstad supported the panel's work.

1.5.2 Institutions and study programmes

In Norway, a bachelor's degree (180 ECTS) is a first-cycle academic degree awarded by the higher education institution upon completion of the programme. A master's degree is a second-cycle academic degree (120 ECTS). The degree requires previous study at the bachelor level, in social sciences usually completed as separate bachelor's degree.³

In political science, 19 study programmes from seven institutions participated in the evaluation.

Institutions	Study programmes
Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA)	1. BA Administration and Management 2. MA Public Management
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)	3. BA Political Science 4. MA Political Science 5. Ph.D. Political Science
University of Agder (UiA)	6. BA Political Science 7. MA Political Science and Management 8. Ph.D. Public Administration
University of Bergen (UiB)	9. BA Comparative Politics 10. BA Administration and Organisation Theory 11. MA Comparative Politics 12. MA Administration and Organisation Theory 13. MA Public Administration
University of Oslo (UiO)	14. BA Political Science 15. MA Political Science 16. Ph.D. Political Science
University of Stavanger (UiS)	17. BA Political Science
University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway (UiT)	18. BA Political Science 19. MA Political Science

³ Lovdata, Forskrift om krav til mastergrad, FOR-2005-12-01-1392, sist endret, ved forskrift 10.6. (2015; FOR-2015-06-10-620), www.lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2005-12-01-1392; Lov om universiteter og høyskoler (universitets- og høyskoleloven), 1. April 2005, nr. 15, LOV-2005-04-01- 15, sist endret 16. Juni, 2017; LOV-2017-06-16-67.

2 Political science in Norway

A particular characteristic of Norway is that political science is not only an academic discipline, but also has a distinct professional orientation (Østerud 2013a). This profile has roots in the historical development of the discipline.

The oldest university in Norway is the University of Oslo that was established in 1811, remaining also Norway's largest university until very recently. Before political science was established in its current form, studies of policy, political systems and social organisations were undertaken by scholars at the university, primarily in history and law. While a few specialised university level institutions and other higher learning institutions were established before the Second World War, the second comprehensive university in Norway was only established in 1946 in Bergen.

In Norway, *degrees* in political science have been issued since 1947, when the University of Oslo received the right to offer a 'magister' degree in political science (mag.art.), at the time at the Faculty of Law. The initiative came from F. Castberg, A.H. Winsnes and S. Steen, who all three represent the origins of the discipline by their scholarships in national and international law, intellectual history and history respectively (Moses 2008). In 1957, the first specialised political science department was established at the Faculty of Law. The initial aim of the programme in political science was to educate qualified journalists and Norwegian diplomats (Stalsberg 2013). In addition to Castberg, Winsnes and Steen, professor in history, Jens Arup Seip, obtained a key role in the development of the discipline. Viewed through the thesis written for the mag.art-degree, intellectual history and political theory were two core topics at the department. Despite the aims to educate for professional practice outside the academia, several of the graduates later joined the staff at the faculty (Thue 1997). In 1963 a separate Faculty of Social Sciences was established (Østerud 2013b), and a department for political science was included in the new faculty.

Not all of the early disciplinary development took place in the university sector. During the 1950s, the Institute for Social Research (Institutt for Samfunnsforskning, ISF) obtained an important role. ISF was founded as an independent research institute in 1950 by a group of researchers who had been associated with professor in philosophy, Arne Næss. During the 1950s, it became an important site for disciplinary development of political science, with well-established international linkages (Moses 2008). Other research institutes that contributed to the overall development of political science as a scientific discipline include Christian Michelsens Institute (CMI), (established in 1930), the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI, 1959) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO, 1959). These three institutes had (and have) maintained an important role for disciplinary development of political science in Norway.

In the end of the 1950s, Stein Rokkan, along with Henry Valen, developed a research programme for elections, emphasising historically oriented political sociology (Moses 2008). Elections have since been a standing feature of political science in Norway.

However, while the number of units and topics in political science grew, the number of political scientists remained comparatively low. An indication of this is the low number of members in the Norwegian political science association. When it was established in the end of 1950s, it only had twenty members, and not all of them were active researchers (Norges Forskningsråd 2002).

The 1960s was a decade of further institutionalisation. The first professorship in political science at the University of Oslo was established in 1965, and was held by Knut Dahl Jacobsen. The following year, in 1966, Rokkan became a professor in comparative politics at the University of Bergen, at the Department of Sociology that was established the following year, in 1967. By 1969 a separate Department of Public Administration and Organisational Studies was established as well. In 1970 political science was included in a new Faculty of Social Sciences. Rokkan passed away in 1979, but Bergen remained strongly influenced by his research (Moses 2008), and in 1980, the University of Bergen established a separate Department of Comparative Politics. To this day, the University has two political science departments.

In 1968 the parliament decided to establish a university in Tromsø. The university opened in 1972, and social sciences were among the prioritised fields (Fulsås, 1993). While the university in Trondheim was founded in 1969, it initially remained an administrative structure over two rather autonomous colleges (technology and teacher training), university library and a museum of science. The integration of these was not reached until the establishment of NTNU as the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in 1996. At the present Oslo, Bergen, Tromsø and Trondheim are considered the four comprehensive research universities in Norway. A characteristic of the Norwegian higher education system is its binary structure. The regional district colleges in Norway were established from 1969 and onwards, to provide professionally oriented education, primarily in the welfare professions, and political science formed part of the subjects offered at the regional universities, (renamed university colleges).

The first decades of intellectual development were marked by a shift towards a more Anglo-American orientation (Østerud 2013b). The first generations of researchers in political science had well established links to American universities. Moreover, the broader development of political science Norway did not retain its initial focus on political theory. It became closer to social sciences than its legal, historical or philosophical origins (Moses 2008). The 1960s and 1970s represented an important time to secure a place for political science, both in academia, as well as in the society and labour market, as the numbers of students expanded considerably. Political scientists became a favoured education for students who aimed at an employment in governmental ministries and public administration in general. The demand from the labour market most likely strengthened the professionally oriented dimension of political science.

When it comes to education, political science is embedded in a higher education system which went through a period of “massification” during the second half of 1980s and beginning of 1990s, with an explosive growth in student numbers, visible also in the number of graduates in political science (Norges Forskningsråd 2002). An important turning point was 1994, when about one hundred small regional colleges were merged into 26 university colleges, creating the binary structure. From 1995, both the university and university college sector have been under the same legal act, at the time extending institutional autonomy but also representing a process of standardization of the higher education system (Kyvik 2008).

A key reform in recent decades for Norwegian higher education is the so-called Quality reform in 2003. The reform was a comprehensive reform of higher education, introducing a new study programme structure that was more in line with the three-cycle structure of the Bologna Process, new grading scale, and leading to changes in the law regarding the autonomy of institutions and their funding structure, to name a few. The reform had important consequences for how educational provision in Norwegian universities and university colleges is organised. In addition to this, the reform was also the basis for

establishing NOKUT and in this manner a formalized quality assurance processes. Moreover, as the reform opened up the option for changing institutional categories, some university colleges who had held ambitions of becoming a university obtained the opportunity to do so. The universities in Agder and Stavanger, and later Nord University were a result of this opportunity. Most recently, Oslo and Akershus University College obtained university status in January 2018. All of those institutions offer education in the field of political science.

In recent years the higher education landscape in Norway has gone through profound changes. The structural reform introduced by the government in 2015 marked the start of a system wide merger process, both between various university colleges with each other, with existing universities, and between higher education institutions and research institutes. A white paper on educational quality was launched by the government early in 2017, and has put increased emphasis on educational quality in Norway, including measures such as merit systems for pedagogical excellence among academic staff.

3 Political Science at the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HIOA)⁴

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) was founded in 2011 after a merger between former Oslo University College and Akershus University College. Studies in engineering, teaching and nursing in the region date back to about one hundred years, while the university colleges in Oslo and Akershus were formed in 1994. After the merger of the two colleges in 2011, HiOA became the largest university college in Norway. In 2017, it had over 18 000 students. The institution has four faculties and three campuses, in Oslo, Sandvika and Kjeller respectively. In January 2018 it was confirmed that HiOA would obtain university status.

The political science programmes are located in the Faculty of Social Sciences, which was established during the 2011 merger and has its main location in Oslo. The faculty offers a range of different professionally oriented study programmes with a social science profile.

Study programmes included in this evaluation:

- BA Bachelor's Programme in Administration and Management (Bachelorstudium i administrasjon og ledelse)
- MA Master's Degree Programme in Public Management (Masterstudium i styring og ledelse)

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HIOA)			
Study programmes included in the evaluation:		BA Administration and Management	MA Public Management
Student population	Number of enrolled students, first year (2017) ⁵	137	71
	Share of female students, total (2017) ⁶ .	53,9	68,1
Admission data	Number of study places per year (2017) ⁷ .	141	
	Number of qualified first choice applicants (2017) ⁸ .	554	
	Grade points (2017) ⁹	44,3	

4 In January 2018 the institution obtained university status and is now called OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University. This assessment refers to HiOA, given that this was the institutional context in which the assessment was conducted.

5 Students who actually started their studies in 2017 after being offered a study place. Data from Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH): <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

6 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

7 Norwegian: Planlagte studieplasser. Data from The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service (NUCAS): <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

8 Data from NUCAS: <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

9 Grade points for the primary certificate quota (Norwegian: ORDF). Grade points are the average of all number grades multiplied by 10. Bonus points may be added, e.g. for science and foreign languages. See full explanation here (Norwegian only):

<http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/opptak/poengberegning/index.html>. Data from NUCAS:

<http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

Output	Completion rates at standard time (% , 2014-2016) ¹⁰ Per study programme: Average: 39,6	41,8	34,2
	A+B grade percentage (2017) ¹¹	34,8	47,4

3.1 Organisation and resources

HiOA offers a BA programme in Administration and Management and an MA programme in Public Management, both organised by the Faculty of Social Sciences. With an annual intake of 141 students the BA programme is among the largest included in this evaluation. Furthermore, it is also of relevance for these two study programmes that the HiOA hosts two research centres within the social sciences – the Centre for the Study of Professions and the Centre for Welfare and Labour Research.

3.2 Initial competence

The initial competence for the BA-programme at HiOA, as measured by entry requirements and pre-university academic achievement, was the third highest of the participating programmes with 44.3 for the regular quota in 2017.

For the master programme, the core admission criteria is a bachelor's degree in organisational and administrative subjects at university or university college level with a scope of at least 45 ECTS credits and two years of relevant work experience. The applicants have to have an average of C or better in their bachelor's degree in a relevant social science discipline, but there are no formal requirements regarding method courses.

There is also an opening to enter the MA programme with any BA-degree by doubling the time of relevant working life experiences. According to the programme description (p. 4) students can also be accepted to the programme if they can present: “A bachelor's degree or equivalent and four years of relevant work experience, of which at least one year in a leading position at middle management or higher level, preferably in the public sector”. The programme description further defines that the work experience must be gained after university or university college studies at bachelor's degree level and the applicant must have worked for a continuous period of at least six months in order for experience to count towards admission.

It is uncommon for MA programmes in political science to take into account work life experience as an admission criterion in addition to a relevant BA-degree. This, and particular the possibility of entering the MA with any BA-degree, seems to open for a broad variety in students' initial competences at the MA-level. In addition, the part time approach to the MA-programme (see below) may challenge the students' capacities to fulfil the programme.

HiOA arranges an annual “open day” inviting prospective students to the main campus to promote applicants to the programme. Moreover, they provide arrangements for study advisers in upper

¹⁰ Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

¹¹ All A and B grades as a percentage of all grades given at the study programme. Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

secondary school. Relevant introductory activities helping students get started, exist at both the BA and MA levels, which is good. The nature and extent of these activities is not fully explained in the self-assessment. However, the additional information describes how MA students are provided with opportunities to interact with other students as well as former students.

It is not clear from the self-assessment to what degree the different activities are coordinated or how many students participate in activities such as the 'buddy system'. Also, some activities appear to be organised across different programmes rather than targeting the students in the administration programmes. This comes with advantages, but also raises an issue concerning ensuring the social and academic integration of students in the specific programmes. The continuous contact with the student organisations is a good feature, but yet again, it is not entirely clear what the contacts really constitute. Nevertheless quite a lot of activity infrastructure is in place, with potential to help students integrate.

To sum up, the admission requirements appear to be satisfactory at both levels and close to national average in 2016 and above average in 2017. The use of work life experience for the MA programmes is relevant for this specific programme that is indeed relating the professional competences in the field of public administration.

3.3 Programme design

The overall design of the BA-programme is in line with the general model of three 10-credit-courses each semester for full-time studies. However, the content of this BA-program does not cover the general mainstream political science curriculum. Instead, there is a clear focus on public administration and management, as indicated by the titles of the programmes: BA Bachelor's Programme in Administration and Management (Bachelorstudium i administrasjon og ledelse) and the MA Master's Degree Programme in Public Management (Masterstudium i styring og ledelse). As the NOKUT evaluation at hand focuses on political science, these two programmes fall partly outside the core area. Nonetheless, we here evaluate the programmes in relation to their own titles and ambitions.

In contrast to mainstream programmes in political science, these programmes do not include any courses in political theory, comparative politics or in international politics/relations. The only course in the BA-programmes with a clear political science grounding is the second course of the first semester "Offentlig politikk og administrasjon" (Public policy and administration). On the other hand, there are courses that indeed focus on the specific core of the programmes. There are courses related to law, organisation studies and accountancy that are relevant for public administration. Thereby, these programmes have an explicit focus on public management and not mainstream political science. The structure of both programmes provides a coherent whole, with clear progress in the field of public administration and openings for different specialisations in this field.

Included in the BA-programme is a 10 credit course in research methods (third semester) preparing for the final thesis worth 15 credits, which the student finalise at the end of their third year. This method course deals with social science in general on a basic level. The number of EC focusing on training in research design and methods is rather low in international comparison and may limit the chance of students to continue their education at foreign universities. There is one compulsory course for internship (10 credits) in the second year. The entire fifth semester is open for international exchange or elective courses at HiOA, also in the field of public management. The last semester includes a

specialisation course in public change management (Strategi, organisasjonsendring og endringsledelse) worth 15 credits and the BA-thesis worth 15 credits.

The MA-programme is primarily offered as a part-time programme where students are supposed to work at the same time and take three years to complete the programme. For full-time students the programme is estimated to take between 1½ year and 2 years. It is worth noting that the overall aims of the MA programme do not explicitly focus on research competences and preparing students for research. Rather, the focus is on what is called PPP - “Preparing for Professional Practice programme”. PPP focuses on key dimensions of professional education. Again, this is an indication that the programme rather aims at professional competences in public administration than an academic research career in political science.

The MA programme consists of three 10 credits courses each of the first two years. The last year is a thesis-course of 30 credits. Thus the students take a total of 90 credits, equal to one and half years of full-time studies. That is one semester, or 30 credits, less than most MA-programmes. In the second year, students take one compulsory methods course (10 credits). In addition, there are two other compulsory course on governance and organisation in the public sector that seems to have more of a political science focus. For the last 30 credits (10 credits the first year and 20 credits the second year) students choose from five to seven (differs over the years) elective courses in public administration. The programme has a clear emphasis on professional competences to enhance employability in the public sector. The programme design and ambition for students to work part time while enrolled in the programme is partly integrated in the course design in order to make use of the double learning (process) in academia and practice. However, the online course instructions do not really enhance the double-learning process in the way one could have expected. Given that there has been a merging of several research institutes at HiOA, it remains unclear how research at HiOA is integrated into these programmes.

The BA students are, according to the Studiebarometer, satisfied with the programme design and rank course connection, work motivation and level of academic challenge slightly higher than the national figures (4.4 vs 4.0; 3.8 vs 3.6; 4.4 vs 4.3). On the other hand, the 12 MA-students who responded to the Studiebarometer are less satisfied. They rate the level of academic challenge at 3.8 compared to a national average of 4.4 for MA-programmes and assess the integration and course design with a lower grade, 3.8 vs 4.0.

To conclude, both programmes have a clear and well-integrated design of the courses in relation to the overall aims of each programme. The HiOA has managed to integrate courses relevant for public administration and to include methods courses and thesis work in relation to the overall objectives of the programme.

3.4 Teaching and assessment methods

The BA programme appears primarily taught in traditional ways including lectures, seminars and assignments (oppgaveløsning). There are some comments on active involvement in seminars and dialogue, as in the course “BAL2000 Styring og samfunn”. School exams and essays are mentioned as the most common method of assessment. Many courses offer of a combination of these two forms of examination. There is a general discussion on the approach of PPP - “Preparing for Professional Practice programme”. PPP focuses on key dimensions of professional education. However, these

dimensions are not transparent in the course plans and there is a potential to use the approach for course design and integration of the students' professional experiences.

The course plans show how the majority of the students' basic required readings, including several policy reports and similar material, is in Norwegian. Only a few English language textbooks and research papers on the reading lists are available online. The same applies for the reading list at the MA-level. This appears appropriate as the master's programme is, to an even greater extent, considered as professional education, and as a form of vocational training by most of the students. However, by means of teaching methods and design of courses links to the students' professional experiences could be enhanced to a greater extent than what we can see from the online course information. It could indeed be interesting to use models like problem-based teaching, case-methods and similar approaches to enhance the practical knowledge which the students already have and thereby also to deepen the interaction of practical and theoretical competences. In the master programme, there are some examples, in the course descriptions, on group work and the importance of personal engagement (egenaktivitet) that could include more such aspects. However, since only half of the courses in the master programme are compulsory there are several different teaching approaches as well. For example, the course "Communication for management" (MSLV4100 Kommunikasjon for ledere) offers a more open approach stating that the teaching methods will vary and include reflection reports.

According to students in the programme, they spend seven weekly hours in classes, in addition to 16 hours of self-study. While this number may appear low, it can be explained by some of the responding students being enrolled part-time. In the Studiebarometer, the students report that they experience similar teaching and assessment methods as the average in Norway. The BA-programme students who responded to the survey indicate that project work and written assignments are applied to a slightly greater extent than average. Master's programme students have not responded to this part of the survey.

Students are offered up to six hours of supervision for the BA-thesis. The supervisor receives 12 hours which includes preparation and follow-up work. Moreover, the programme includes 12 hours teaching sessions on how to write BA-thesis, which are additional to the method course.

One third of the MA-programme consists of work related to the individual master's thesis. The programme description offers only limited information about how the HiOA supports MA-students in accomplishing the objective of submitting a good master's thesis. Work related to the master's thesis (30 credits) covers one full academic year as a part time work. The students are offered eight hours of supervision, which corresponds to 24 hours for the supervisors as preparation and follow-up work are included. That makes it approximately one hour a month that is probably a very slow process. Numbers of how many students succeed in submitting the part-time thesis or the average time needed for finalizing a thesis are not available.

In the self-assessment report, the HiOA has focused on how they evaluate courses, not primarily assessments of students' performance. The HiOA have an internal well-organised quality assurance system, including external assessment panels every six years. Both programmes are part of this system and evaluations of courses and programme designs are carried out continuously.

The overall impression of teaching and assessment methods is that both these programmes have relevant designs of course content and teaching methods in relation to the titles of the programmes.

However, the reading lists are generally rather basic and consist of mainly Norwegian language literature. Very good international textbooks are available in the field of public administration, which for instance cover the interdisciplinary fields of political science, organisation theory, communication and law. In this respect, both programmes have a potential for improvement.

The assessment methods correspond to the programme design and evaluate the overall aims of the programme. As the programmes build on the working life experience of the students, there is a potential to be more innovative, in particular by utilizing the students' competences and experiences from having a professional career beside/ parallel to the MA programme. In this respect, the HiOA has a potential to further develop the teaching and assessment methods.

3.5 Learning environment in study programmes

The self-assessment describes a number of activities organised by the faculty which emphasise disseminating research to students and encouraging them to attend extra-curricular academic activities. It is not clear to what extent students participate in these activities, which do not appear to be specifically targeted towards students in the administration programmes.

Overall, both BA and MA students seem to be satisfied with the learning environment, as indicated by most of the scores in Studiebarometeret which are close to the national average. In two aspects the BA students rank their education below national average: the social environment among the students in the programme (3.3 vs 3.8) and the academic environment among the students in the programme (3.5 vs 3.7). This points to a potential issue in ensuring a good learning environment in relation to the specific study programme.

On the other hand, they rank the environment among the students and the academic staff in the programme above national average (3.8 vs 3.5). Also, the MA-students evaluate the learning environment in line with the national average, while the academic environment among the students in the programme is ranked above national average (4.1 vs 3.9).

3.6 Educational competence

According to the online course plans, all teachers are professors or associate professors at the MA level. Similarly, the competence among teachers at the BA level is generally high and includes only one part-time contracted lecturer (giving the only course on governance). What the teachers may lack is, as discussed below, the international research context and related collaboration since most of their work seems to be set in a Norwegian or Nordic context.

HiOA's centre for university pedagogy offers a course on university pedagogy ('Universitets- og høyskolepedagogisk basiskompetanse'/UHPED). The course is arranged at the HiOA's Centre for the Study of Professions. The teachers are required to complete UHPED within the first two years of employment. According to HiOA's complementary information 14 out of the 19 staff have basic pedagogical training.

3.7 Achieved learning

The students' final academic performance in the BA-programme is below average level for the participating programmes. The percentage of students getting A or B marks is 34.8 percent. While a system of external examiners ensures a certain level of consistency across institutions, it is however highly questionable whether differences in the share of students obtaining high grades indicate differences in achieved learning. On average, the BA-students obtain 45.5 credits per academic year, which is relatively high.

The students rate their own achieved learning outcomes above the national average in the Studiebarometer. In particular, the BA-students evaluate their own achieved learning higher when it comes to "experience with research and development work" (3.8 vs 3.0) and also "cooperative skills" (4.0 vs 3.5). The master students have a less clear picture of achieved learning and rank their own outcome both higher and lower than the national average. Their self-assessment indicates that they have reached a good level in "cooperative skills" (4.3 vs 3.5) and score rather well when ranking their own innovative thinking (3.9 vs 3.6).

The self-assessment report gives an impression of a high-quality education programme based on collaboration of research and education. The university college aims to educate "... practitioners with high levels of professional ability and high-impact skill sets, and facilitate lifelong learning by providing continuing and further education." (p. 3). To which degree these ambitions are reached can be discussed, since students rank performance in this respect relatively low in the Studiebarometer.

3.8 Internationalisation

According to the self-assessment report, the HiOA participates in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education. According to the self-assessment the objective is to support internationalisation. However, means of realizing this objective are not provided. According to the report, HiOA offers courses in English of at least 30 ECTS, allowing international students to undertake one semester at HiOA. These courses are also available for Norwegian students, in order to facilitate their preparations for periods abroad. However, course titles in English cannot be found when browsing through the online course plans. The lack of courses taught in English may also indicate that there are few "incoming" exchange students, which in turn could be fruitful for the programmes. According to HiOA's supplemental information, only six incoming students participated in the BA programme in 2017 and none in the MA-programme. The number of outgoing BA-students are 17.8 percent.

As discussed above, the course design does not open for international comparisons or collaboration. The course plans and reading lists have a bias towards describing and explaining the situation in Norwegian public administration. The reading lists are in general in Norwegian, including several reports and internal governmental and policy documents from municipalities, regions and the national government in Norway. This again indicates that the programmes have a clear focus on educating staff for the Norwegian public administration rather than positing the programme in an international research context.

The teachers' international collaboration and participation in academic debates is difficult to evaluate since there are few explicit numbers and details about teaching staff. The overall impression is that

internationalisation is not prioritized on the agenda of this university college. At the same time, there is a potential to improve this.

3.9 Relevance

The two programmes at HiOA which are included in this evaluation are highly relevant for the labour market and society. However, these are not programmes in political science but in public management and with a distinct focus on the Norwegian setting.

Both programmes provide good connections to the potential labour market. Yet, as discussed above, there is potential to further enhance the connection to the labour market and the students' professional capacities, for example in relation to teaching methods. A compulsory internship worth 10 ECTS is included in the BA-programme in the second year. The MA-programme is running as a part-time programme. Thus, the students can establish useful relations the labour market and experience the relevance of their education.

Based on the overall objective and the course design of the programmes, the HiOA is highly relevant for public administration in Norway and related organisations. The professional competences that is needed in municipalities, regions and the national public administration in Norway seems to be a main focus of the programme. However, this is quite a limited focus on relevance and excludes several aspects of general political science. The focus areas of both programmes form a 'natural' occupational field. However, the students apparently question to what extent the programmes facilitate a smooth transition to the labour market, given their responses in the Studiebarometer. In general, the students rate the relevance in line with national average. However, in both programmes the students rank the programmes' ability to provide good career opportunities significantly lower than national average, which is 3.0 vs 3.4 for the BA-programme and 2.8 vs 3.6 for the MA-programme. This is problematic for programmes which emphasise the professional competences and employability.

3.10 Educational leadership

The section about educational leadership in the self-assessment of HiOA focuses on the university level and in particular on a new course for university leadership. The report does not provide explicit information about the management of these two programmes. Nor are the relations to the research centres at HiOA discussed. The merging with the research centres could improve the educational leadership and have an impact also on the design of the programmes.

Other parts of the self-assessment indicate that there is a good research network for teachers, which is established by means of cooperation with the research institutes at HiOA. It remains somewhat unclear to what extent the academic leadership ensures that educational resources are available and that resources and competences are available for study programmes due to the new organisation and the ambitions to integrate the research institutes into the university college. There is probably a good chance that this will develop over time and give teachers unique possibilities to combine teaching and research and also provide good and relevant training for students enrolled in these educational programmes.

3.11 Overall assessment of the quality of the education

These study programmes at the HiOA are generally good. They are here seen not as programmes in political science but are assessed in relation to their titles in public administration. As such, they provide a good and well-integrated set of courses. The BA-programme has a compulsory internship and courses combining competences from several academic fields with high relevance for the Norwegian public administration. The admission criteria to the MA-programme include experiences from the labour market and the programme is designed as a part-time programme for students working part time in the field. Based on these conditions the overall learning outcomes in public management and the programmes harmonise well. The panel recommends that the following points are considered by the institution:

First, there is a clear focus on employability in the Norwegian public administration and most readings in the courses are in Norwegian, in particular in the BA-programme. Although these programmes have a different focus than more traditional political science programmes, there is a potential to increase the quality of the programmes by more emphasis on the international research literature and relevant textbooks in the field.

Second, in line with many other bachelor programmes within the broad field of political science the level of method training is low compared to universities in other countries. While other universities compensate for this by very research-focused MA programmes this is not the case at the HiOA. It is therefore particularly urgent to consider whether the research skills obtained by students are at a sufficiently high standard for a programme at this level.

Third, the programmes are part of a portfolio of study programmes offered by the Faculty of Social Sciences. Although the available material does not provide much information about the specific academic and learning environment associated with the evaluated programmes, there are some indications of a potential for improvement. There also seems to be a potential to develop the academic leadership in this respect.

Fourth, according to the provided material, the amount of contact hours for students with MA thesis related questions appears to be quite limited. It may be worthwhile to offer more supervision or other more collective activities in support of the work, especially during a thesis process covering a full academic year.

Fifth, while the staff teaching in the programme are clearly qualified and most are active researchers, they are not as embedded in the international research environment in comparison to other programmes. This may therefore be a point of attention. Additionally, the inclusion of the staff from the research institutes has a potential to further improve the education with respect to its relation to the international research environment.

4 Political science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), was founded as a university in 1996 after a merger between six research and higher education institutions in the Trondheim area. In 2016, they merged with the university colleges in Gjøvik, Ålesund and Sør-Trøndelag, and became the largest university in Norway. NTNU is a comprehensive university with a technological emphasis, with research and training in nearly all disciplines and professions.

The political science programmes can be found in the Faculty of Social and Educational Science. The faculty has seven departments and covers most disciplines in social science and education.

Study programmes in this evaluation:

- BA in Social Science and Political Science
- MA in Political Science
- PhD in Political Science

Name of institution			
Study programmes included in the evaluation:		BA in Social Science and Political Science	MA in Political Science
Student population	Number of enrolled students, first year (2017) ¹²	118	27
	Share of female students, total (2017) ¹³ .	52,9	49,4
Admission data	Number of study places per year (2017) ¹⁴ .	100	
	Number of qualified first choice applicants (2017) ¹⁵ .	208	
	Grade points (2017) ¹⁶	46,4	
Output	Completion rates at standard time (% , 2014-2016) ¹⁷ Per study programme: Average: 43,9	43,3	45,4

12 Students who actually started their studies in 2017 after being offered a study place. Data from Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH): <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

13 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

14 Norwegian: Planlagte studieplasser. Data from The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service (NUCAS): <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

15 Data from NUCAS: <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

16 Grade points for the primary certificate quota (Norwegian: ORDF). Grade points are the average of all number grades multiplied by 10. Bonus points may be added, e.g. for science and foreign languages. See full explanation here (Norwegian only):

<http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/opptak/poengberegning/index.html>. Data from NUCAS:

<http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

17 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

	A+B grade percentage (2017) ¹⁸	39,9	59,4
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4.1 Organisation and resources

Political science at NTNU is taught in the interdisciplinary Department of Sociology and Political Science, which was established in 1992. There are 16 permanent full-time members of the political science teaching staff serving as professors or associate professors in the department, and there is also one post that is shared with sociology. The department offers a full range of political science degrees, including a three-year bachelor's degree programme, a two-year master's programme as well as a PhD programme in political science. In recent years there have been about 250 registered BA students and 80-95 registered MA students in political science in the department. The department focuses on four core areas of the discipline: public administration, political behaviour, comparative politics and international relations. It should be noted that political theory is not mentioned here, which reflects the fact that political theory does not feature very prominently in these programmes, though some courses (e.g., on democratic theory) address some debates in political theory.

4.2 Initial competence

The initial competence at NTNU, as measured by entry requirements and pre-university academic achievement, is high. The entry requirements at the bachelor's level are among the highest in the country (in 2017, the corresponding figure was 46.4 for the regular quota as compared to the national average of 42.8 according to the comparative data provided), though they fall slightly short of the level required at the University of Oslo.

The core admissions criterion for the MA programme is a bachelor's degree in political science with at least 90 credits in political science, but bachelor's degrees in European studies or political economy from NTNU also satisfy this requirement. Prior training should include a bachelor's thesis (like POL2900) and methods training (like SOSI1002). The minimum expected GPA has been a C-average in the past, but there was guaranteed admission of anyone with a B-average in 2016-17. This policy will be revisited on an annual basis. Students who lack some of the prerequisites are encouraged to contact the department, which can advise applicants with different academic backgrounds on what they would need to do to satisfy the admissions requirements, e.g. by taking additional courses. Graduates of the bachelor's programmes in Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger, and Nordland are also deemed to meet the relevant prerequisites, as are those from Agder and Tromsø, provided they have completed a bachelor's thesis.

Applicants to the PhD programme are expected to get in touch with prospective supervisors and to develop their applications jointly with them. Admissions decisions are taken based on prior academic qualifications as well as the quality of the research proposal and plans for doctoral study.

The department also provides additional training focused on research skills and writing to incoming students. Junior lecturers and teaching assistants provide special training sessions which all incoming

¹⁸ All A and B grades as a percentage of all grades given at the study programme. Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

students are encouraged to attend, with additional training sessions provided by the library. There is limited information about other kinds of introduction activities provided by the department at the BA level.

The department organises an orientation meeting for all new BA and MA students, at which they receive information about the structure of the programme. There is also a welcome reception where students can meet each other and various staff members in a more informal setting. New BA students are also invited to join the buddy programme organised by the student organisation Leviathan, which helps familiarise them with the department and with other students.

4.3 Programme design

The programmes offered at NTNU are very well structured and carefully designed. Learning outcomes are appropriate and well specified at the programme level.

There is an excellent range of courses on offer in the BA programme. There is also a logical progression in the BA programme from core courses in the first year to a wide range of specialist options later in the programme. This ensures that students have a strong foundation in key areas of political science as well as opportunities to specialise. The goals and objectives for individual courses are identified in terms of precise learning outcomes that specify the key knowledge and skills that students acquire during each course. The range of specialist options is impressive, especially considering the size of the department, and reflect the breadth of the subject of political science. Options include courses on political economy, political communication, the politics and international relations of various world regions, the politics of oil and natural resources and various topics in international relations and security. A distinctive feature of the programme is the emphasis on interdisciplinarity and the opportunity to take a range of sociology options as part of the BA programme. It should be noted that the core methodology course (SOS1002 - Samfunnsvitenskapelig forskningsmetode – 15 credits) is also taught to an interdisciplinary audience and offered jointly by sociology. The BA thesis (POL2900 - 15 credits) is mandatory for political science students.

At the MA level the structure is similar: five compulsory courses (one 15 credit course on democratic theory, three courses adding up to 30 credits on methods and a 7.5 credit course on ‘Experts in Teamwork’) and a compulsory thesis, plus a range of options covering various fields, including international relations, the politics of specific regions, political economy, public policy, political history as well as religion and politics. Students have the choice of either a 30 or a 45-credit thesis, which provides students with a degree of choice in terms of how much emphasis they want to put on the research and thesis component.

The PhD programme has three compulsory components: a course on philosophy of social science (“Theory of Science in the Social Sciences”), a course on methodology and a substantive course. PhD students can focus either on qualitative or quantitative methods and they can choose the substantive course from a long list of options, some of which overlap with similar courses offered at the master’s level. These may be offered as independent reading courses, if fewer than six students sign up to take them in a given year. Some of the courses overlap with similar courses offered at the master’s level.

While most responses to questions on programme design are quite close to the national average, the majority fall slightly below it. It should in particular be noted that the answers to the question whether

the courses are well connected and integrated fall below the national average at both the BA and MA level (3.8 compared to the national average of 4.0 at the BA level and 3.6 compared to the national average of 4.0 at the MA level). The pattern in the case of whether the programme ‘stimulates my motivation for working with my studies’ is similar (3.3 compared to the national average of 3.6 at the BA level and 3.7 compared to the national average of 3.8 at the MA level).

4.4 Teaching and assessment methods

Teaching and assessment methods are varied and appropriate to high quality university teaching. There is a mix of lectures and seminars, which is quite similar to what can be found at other leading institutions, and there is some use of group work and other teaching techniques. It is not clear to what extent online tools and resources are used. Reading lists are well designed and generally incorporate a variety of readings, ranging from textbooks for introductory courses to journal articles in the case of more advanced courses.

At the master’s level there is also a highly distinctive core course called ‘Experts in Teamwork’ (Eksperter i team), which puts great emphasis on developing the students’ skills at conducting teamwork and collaborative projects successfully. This course puts great emphasis on empirical cases and situational learning and provides a variety of opportunities for students to reflect on their collaborative work experience. This is a compulsory course for NTNU students across faculties and a unique initiative in terms of its emphasis on skill development and innovative pedagogy. The NTNU careers service also offers a range of courses in study skills, exam techniques that should be helpful to BA and MA students in need of more support.

Students at the BA level get eight hours of individual supervision for their theses, whereas MA students get 50 hours of individual supervision. This suggests that the department provides extensive guidance and support for independent student research both at the BA and MA levels.

Assessments include exams, including a move towards electronic exams in some courses, but there is also a considerable focus on research papers. In introductory BA courses such papers are taken pass/fail and they provide an opportunity for students to acquire research skills and prepare for the exams. In more advanced undergraduate and master’s courses, these research papers are the core assessment method. Such research papers are usually complemented with an oral exam, which addresses both the research paper as such and the general learning outcomes of the course. This is a very sophisticated, but also resource-intensive assessment method, which undoubtedly assesses student achievement and contributes to transferable analytical and communication skills as well.

The responses to the Studiebarometer indicate that students view traditional teaching methods, such as lectures and seminars, as the key component of the teaching provision. It seems that the use of project work is used less frequently than the national average, esp. at the BA level (where the score is 0.9 compared to the national average of 1.5), but also at the MA level (where the score is 1.7 compared to the national average of 1.9). The survey responses also indicate that NTNU students devote slightly more time to their studies than the national average (10 hours of organised teaching compared to 9.6 on average, and 22.2 hours of independent study, compared to the national average of 19.7). In terms of assessment methods, all responses are very close to national average, so overall they are largely representative of national patterns.

4.5 Learning environment in study programmes

The learning environment is enriched by a variety of activities led by students, such as the 'line organisation' Leviathan representing students and the Student Youth Festival. There is also a special master's seminar that is designed to strengthen the student community. But beyond academic staff involvement in some of the student-led activities, it is less clear how well various activities are integrated into the academic programme as such. The self-assessment provides limited information about many aspects of the learning environment, such as existing facilities and activities. There is not much detailed information about for example study spaces, library facilities or electronic resources. Yet, it is possible that these are of high quality, but that it has not been documented in the self-assessment or elsewhere. Based on the self-assessment, it is also unclear how much is done by the department to foster a strong learning environment at the bachelor's level.

The responses in the Studiebarometer survey are very close to the national average, though the satisfaction with ICT tools and services is above the national average (4.2 at the BA level and 4.0 at the MA level compared to the national average of 3.8 in both cases). By contrast, the environment between students and academic staff is slightly below the national average (3.3 compared to 3.5 at the BA level and 3.5 compared to 3.8 at the MA level), which is also the case for the academic environment among students (3.6 compared to 3.7 at the BA level and 3.6 compared to 3.9 at the MA level). In a couple of cases, the responses are slightly above the national average among BA students, but slightly below it at the MA level. This, for example, applies to the social environment among students (3.9 compared to 3.8 at the BA level, but 3.7 compared to 4.0 at the MA level).

4.6 Educational competence

The educational competence seems high, with an overwhelming majority of teaching done by permanent and research-active academics, either professors or associate professors (*førsteamanuensis*). These academics routinely publish in both Norwegian and international outlets, such as leading peer-reviewed journals or academic book publishers. This suggests that the teaching staff is well qualified to offer instruction in these areas. NTNU also shares some staff with PRIO (Peace Research Institute in Oslo) who offer specialised instruction in related areas. Trial lectures are routinely incorporated into the appointment process and evaluated both by academic staff and students.

There is a mandatory training programme for new academic staff (known as 'Pedup'), which has to be completed within three years of the appointment. Currently 65 percent of the permanent academic staff members have undertaken pedagogical training, with this percentage expected to rise over time, given that all new appointments receive this training. There is also evidence of a culture of recognising good teaching, including a reward structure for accomplished teachers, who are awarded prizes at the annual Christmas lunch.

There are regular evaluations of teaching quality and programme design within the department. It is clear that the department puts great emphasis on delivering high quality teaching and on reflecting on its teaching practices. Teaching is highly valued and a variety of procedures are in place for ensuring quality and rewarding excellent performance.

4.7 Achieved learning

Academic performance in the political science programme at the bachelor's level is high. Indeed the percentage of students getting A/B marks is well above the national average for both the BA and MA programme. Full-time students in the BA programme completed 43.3 credits in 2017 and students in the MA programme completed 39 credits in 2017. Both are slightly below the national average.

The Studiebarometer scores are mostly close to the national average, but there are a few differences. On a few dimensions the scores are above the national average, such as in the case of 'knowledge of scientific work methods and research' (3.7 at the BA level compared to the national average of 3.5, 4.2 at the MA level compared to the national average of 3.9). The scores for 'critical thinking and reflection' and 'written communication skills' are also above the national average. By contrast, a few other scores are below the national average, including innovative thinking (3.3 at the BA level compared to the national average of 3.5 and 3.1 at the MA level compared to the national average of 3.6) or 'oral communication skills (2.6 at the BA level compared to the national average of 3.3 and 2.8 at the MA level compared to the national average of 3.3).

4.8 Internationalisation

There is evidence of internationalisation along several dimensions. First, there are several international academic staff members (from the United States, Australia and Sri Lanka), who also maintain international research networks and attract foreign visitors. This clearly benefits the students as well.

International topics, both related to international relations and to the politics of various global regions and foreign countries, feature very prominently in the course offerings, and there is a clear sense that the teaching engages with international debates in the field. Many reading lists incorporate international literature as well. In addition, there are also international instructors who contribute to the teaching provision– for example, in 2017-18 Prof. Shanto Iyengar from Stanford University teaches one of the master's options on 'Media, Opinion and Political Behaviour.'

There are a variety of academic exchanges, including research visits etc. There is also an agreement with the sociology departments at both UCLA and UC Berkeley, which facilitates student exchanges and enables exchange students to take a variety of courses that count towards their political science degree at NTNU. There are also institutional agreements for student exchanges with various other universities, such as University of Strasbourg, University of Vienna, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Lyon and Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Moreover, there is a well-developed exchange programme allowing international students to take a variety of courses in English at NTNU, and special provisions allowing students to take some Norwegian language courses in English, if there is demand for it. The range of courses offers visiting students both at the bachelor's and master's level ample choice of courses on a range of topics, including American and Norwegian politics, political economy, international relations and other political science topics. There is also an elaborate university-wide welcome week for international students facilitating their integration into NTNU and making it easier for them to settle into life in Norway.

It is clear that there are both NTNU and international students who take advantage of existing exchange programmes. The share of the students who take advantage of the exchange programme is not insignificant, as approximately 10 percent of the political science students at NTNU go on an

exchange abroad, and there are typically 70 international students taking at least some political science courses in a given year.

4.9 Relevance

The strong grounding students get in key areas of political science, research methods as well as a range of applied topics suggests that the degree programmes at NTNU prepares their students well for future careers in political science and a variety of other fields as well. However, it should be noted that student assessments of relevance are close to the national average, and even slightly lower on some questions, both at the bachelor's and master's level. Yet, the overall assessment of the degrees and their usefulness is favourable and broadly in line with national trends.

NTNU provides support for career development. The online system 'NTNU bridge' which students can log onto, contains a database of information about careers. This system advertises a range of internship opportunities that students take advantage of both during and after their studies and also helps match them up with prospective employers. The NTNU careers service offers feedback on individual CVs, career advice and also organises various events and career fairs. They also organise workshops on presentation skills, job interviews and other transferable skills that are likely to be valuable on the job market. However, the department does not systematically promote or integrate internships or professional skills training into the curriculum.

The responses to the Studiebarometer survey indicate some potential for expanding the provision of employability-related skills and activities. Except for the question related to the usefulness of the general competences acquired, for which NTNU students give above-average scores, the assessments of most dimensions related to relevance tend to be below the national average. The biggest difference can be found in the case of the question 'cooperates well with workplaces in the labour market', where both the BA score (2.3 compared to the national average of 2.8) and MA score (2.0 compared to the national average of 2.9).

This suggests that the usefulness of the degree programme in terms of employability and professional development does not seem as clear to the students as it could be. Given the high overall quality of the programmes, there could be greater emphasis on the relevance of the activities already provided by the department. In addition, there would also be scope for further reflection on the potential for introducing new activities, such as internships or additional skills training (with an emphasis on transferable skills or skills with a vocational component).

4.10 Educational leadership

There seems to be a clear management structure involving a management group, a head of department and the faculty level as well. The political science community at NTNU also prides itself on a tradition of collegiality in terms of educational leadership, with great involvement of staff members in planning processes and decision-making. This is a laudable principle and should ensure great commitment of staff members to the agreed goals. While there is not much specific detail on educational leadership provided, all indications suggest that educational leadership is effective.

4.11 Overall assessment of the quality of the education

This is a strong department which offers a very good university education across all levels. There are clear connections between learning outcomes and programme design across all programmes. Both the educational competence of the staff and the programme design are excellent. It should also be noted that the programme design is related to the research carried out by academic staff in the department. The strong research culture of the department is also reflected in the PhD programme, which is well designed and prepares its students to become professional political science researchers and teachers. The PhD programme offers students the choice of either writing a monograph-based thesis or a thesis consisting of four articles.

All the programmes in the departments are well designed and challenging, and they enable the students to gain a strong foundation in political science. Levels of initial competence and internationalisation are very good.

The panel suggests that the department considers changes in some areas. First, more could be done to enhance the perceived relevance of these degree programmes, and it may be worth reflecting on the scope for promoting internships either as part of the degree programmes or as an extracurricular complement to them.

Second, there may also be some potential for reflecting more holistically on the learning environment and for expanding orientation activities within the department for new students both at the BA and MA level.

Third, while the learning environment is broadly reflective on national trends, the lack of detail provided in the self-assessment along with the responses in the Studiebarometer survey indicate that there may be scope for more reflection on the elements that are essential for an environment conducive to student learning in the department.

Fourth, although the department is overall successful regarding internationalisation, there would be scope for increasing the share of students going abroad. This would allow a larger number of NTNU political science students to take advantage of exchange programmes and to gain further international perspectives.

Fifth, the responses to the Studiebarometer survey indicate some room for improvement in terms of clarifying the rationale of the programme structure to students. While the programme is well designed, the fact that a majority of the relevant responses fall below the national average suggests that some students do not fully understand the underlying logic, and more could be done to explain the rationale and coherence of the programme structure.

5 Political Science at the University of Agder (UiA)

The University of Agder was founded in 2007, when Agder University College gained university status. The University College in Agder was established in 1994, when six regional colleges merged into a single university college. The university now has seven faculties, of which the Faculty of Social Sciences is one. Currently, the university has two campuses in Southern Norway, in Kristiansand and Grimstad. The Faculty of Social Sciences is divided into four departments, with a separate Department of Political Science and Management.

Study programmes in this evaluation:

- BA in Political Science
- MA in Political Science and Management
- PhD in Public Administration

University of Agder			
Study programmes included in the evaluation:		BA in Political Science	MA in Political Science and Management
Student population	Number of enrolled students, first year (2017) ¹⁹	52	22
	Share of female students, total (2017) ²⁰ .	41,7	44.1
Admission data	Number of study places per year (2017) ²¹ .	40	
	Number of qualified first choice applicants (2017) ²² .	64	
	Grade points (2017) ²³	41,7	
Output	Completion rates at standard time (% , 2014-2016) ²⁴ Per study programme: Average: 44,5	48,1	35,9
	A+B grade percentage (2017) ²⁵	41,3	44,7

19 Students who actually started their studies in 2017 after being offered a study place. Data from Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH): <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

20 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

21 Norwegian: Planlagte studieplasser. Data from The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service (NUCAS): <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

22 Data from NUCAS: <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

23 Grade points for the primary certificate quota (Norwegian: ORDF). Grade points are the average of all number grades multiplied by 10. Bonus points may be added, e.g. for science and foreign languages. See full explanation here (Norwegian only): <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/opptak/poengberegning/index.html>. Data from NUCAS:

<http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

24 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

25 All A and B grades as a percentage of all grades given at the study programme. Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

5.1 Organisation and resources

Currently (2017) the Department of Political Science and Management (Institutt for statsvitenskap og ledelsesfag) offers one educational programme with relevance for political science for each of the BA, MA and PhD levels. A second MA programme was launched during the autumn semester in 2017. While the BA programme is a straight political science programme with a public administration tilt, the MA and PhD programmes are more geared towards public administration and management as such.

The selection of programmes at all levels is quite ambitious given that the milieu is quite small. The self-assessment report mentions 12 permanent staff with a total of 400 students and the university is set in a small city. The BA programme has 40 places available each year but sometimes accepts 50+ students. The MA programme offers 30 places but appears to enroll only about 20 students annually. The PhD programme in public administration has six active PhD candidates at the moment.

5.2 Initial competence

According to the DBH/NOKUT portal there are 1.6 applicants per available BA place, which is slightly below national figure (2.0). No figures are provided for the MA and PhD programmes. Entry scores for the BA was 41.7 in 2017 compared to 42.8 which was the average for the participating programmes in this evaluation (no MA/PhD figures provided but the fact that only two thirds of the available MA places are filled indicates a rather low number of MA applicants).

Admission to the MA programme requires a BA with a minimum of either two years of integrated studies of subjects in the social sciences, law or economics or a minimum of 80 higher education credits of specialisation courses from those subjects with at least 20 higher education credits at level 2. These requirements are in keeping with what may be expected at other similar programmes. As regards research methods, at least 10 higher education credits of research methods is required by Agder. Many similar MA programmes would ask for 15 credits in BA research methods courses. In comparison, 10 is distinctly lower.

A range of introductory activities is in place. The self-assessment report mentions the department's elaborate 'introductory week' with social events for the BA students. Yet, it is not entirely clear exactly what is being done. Second and third year BA students are also invited to the annual 'master dinner' as an informal preparation for potential MA studies. New MA students are offered a 'welcome' event with information about what can be expected of them. Apart from these more focused activities, the department is continuously in contact with the BA and MA student organisations as a way of gaining insights about student concerns.

As for the PhD programme, the self-assessment report lists admission requirements, which place a strong emphasis on the applicants' academic merits. Apart from a master's thesis with sound minimum requirements regarding research methods and course content, the applicants must submit a 10 page project description. Additional information has been provided, which underlines that applicants will not be considered for admission to the PhD programme if they have an average grade for modules in the relevant subject area lower than B, grades for graduate modules lower than B, or a grade for their master's degree thesis (or equivalent) lower than B. These requirements are fully in line with what would be expected.

To sum up, most of the admission requirements appear to be in line with what can be expected. Introductory activities to help students get started definitely exist at both the BA and MA levels. It is less clear how the BA activities are organised and to what extent the students actually use them but there are continuous contacts with the student organisations. Overall, quite a lot of activity infrastructure is in place, with potential to help students integrate.

5.3 Programme design

On the one hand, the BA in political science offers all the traditional core political science themes: comparative politics, public administration, political theory/philosophy and international politics. Each theme comprises separate courses of 10 credits each. On the other hand, the self-assessment report underlines that the programme has ‘a special emphasis in the public administration tradition’ and this is certainly true. Several additional courses (four courses at 10 credits each) are based on public administration with only a few non-public administration course (‘The European Union Institutions and Politics’, 10 credits). The research methods element comprises 10 credits and this goes for the bachelor thesis as well. Apart from a selection of freestanding UiA courses, one year is earmarked for courses offered by cooperating institutions.

The strong public administration element makes for a coherent programme structure as such, but the labelling suggests a different content. A programme name along the lines of ‘Political Science and Public Administration’, would therefore be closer to the actual content. Moreover, this is where the institution has its research focus, including the teachers’ specialties. It is not in political science proper.

In relation to the BA programme’s formally stated learning outcomes the public administration focus is accurate. Several of the learning outcomes relate to various aspects of public administration and reflect the actual programme’s content and at the proper academic level. However, an exception is the learning outcome related to the Norwegian political system. This aspect is not particularly well mirrored in any of the programme’s courses, or is at least difficult to discern in the courses.

As regards the focus on research methods and research design and approaches the programme’s 10 credit research methods course and 10 credit bachelor thesis are slightly lower than what would be expected. Many programmes in other universities would offer 15 credit versions – and the jump from Agder’s 10 credit BA thesis to Agder’s 40 credit MA thesis is really far.

As for the MA in political science and management, the politics element is present but it is very slim. A ‘public administration’ or ‘public organisation and management’ label would be more in line with what is actually being offered.

Overall, the programme’s stated learning outcomes are mirrored by the various courses’ content and academic progression during the programme is evident in the learning outcomes. However, there is one issue to discuss. Even though political matters can certainly be dealt with inside organisation courses, there are in fact just a few courses specifically focused on politics. A low number of substantive courses is somewhat of a general MA programme feature outside Agder as well. However, there is a distinct gap between Agder’s political systems and governance MA course content and the

programme's stated learning outcome about 'thorough knowledge of political structures and processes'.

The MA programme offers 20 credits in research methods by means of two 10 credits courses. 20 credits is in line with what would be expected even though there may be some overlap between the two courses' learning outcomes (course websites; the ME 400-1/ 'research methods and statistics' learning outcomes are broader and less detailed while the ST-423/'research design and advanced methods for the social sciences' outcomes are more detailed).

The Agder PhD programme is a 'public administration' specialisation and the taught part of the programme is in line with its label. The course element comprises 30 ECTS with a compulsory 10 credit course (ST-600 'composite political systems and governance'), a 5 credit course (from electives) and 15 credits research methods. In the 'description' provided by the website some features of the programme include 'European' as well as 'boundary crossing'; these elements are covered by the ST-600 course's learning outcomes and content. However, these aspects are not at all reflected in the programme's overarching learning outcomes, which all refer to public administration in a more general sense. Finally, the term 'politics' or 'political' is absent from the learning outcomes.

Overall, the BA students seem to be comparatively happy with their studies, with satisfaction levels regarding programme design at about 4.0 or higher, which is the same or slightly better than the national figures (Studiebarometer). The MA students are equally satisfied. Course connection, work motivation and level of academic challenge are all rated high, and distinctly higher than the national figures (4.5 vs 4.4; 4.1 vs 3.8; 4.3 vs 4.0).

5.4 Teaching and assessment methods

It is a little difficult to assess exactly how the courses are taught, and some of the information provided is equivocal. The self-assessment report lists several examination methods, such as 'written final exams, term papers, thesis, multiple choice tests etc.' However, according to the UiA website information about the BA courses only written exams are used.

The self-assessment report gives the impression that there may be need for some improvements and that the department is about to handle this ('we are in the process of developing and testing new methods'. According to information, the department has had 'valuable sessions with scholars from the Center for Teaching and Learning as well as faculty from the Department of Political Science and the Department of Sociology'; moreover the department is 'currently'/October 2017/ at UC Berkeley). Thus, on the one hand the department appears to be dealing with perceived problems. On the other hand, there is no analysis about why there is a need for new methods in the first place. Have there been teacher demands or student complaints or is the will to change simply down to a sense that 'something has to be done'?

What appears to be a lack of use of seminars at the BA level is borne out by the Studiebarometer figures, where Agder BA students indicate that seminars are a much less frequent feature at Agder than what students from elsewhere claim. (Agder: 2.5; national: 3.9). Moreover, 'group without teacher' is far more frequent at Agder than nationally (3.5 vs 1.9), whereas 'written assignment' is a little less frequent at Agder (3.5) compared to the national figure (3.9). In sum, there is some cause for

concern regarding teaching and assessment methods. However, at the same time it is evident from the written exam questions (see the course website pages) that the character of these questions is totally in keeping with what may be expected. The exam questions progressively change character over the different levels throughout the programme in a satisfactory fashion.

The BA courses are well structured and with relevant content; the number of taught hours is relatively high (student reports to use 12 hours/week compared to the national average of 9.6 hours/week) and the coordinating staff is well qualified with a rather strong professor and associate professor presence. 70 percent of teachers hold a PhD degree (there is no information about how many teaching hours various types of staff deliver on the courses). However, one issue needs to be mentioned. The reading lists provided via the course websites primarily include textbooks and are limited regarding academic journal articles (there are some on the 'Administrasjon og ledelse i offentlig forvaltning' course in semester three and perhaps some on one semester six course ('Institusjonalisme og transnasjonal governance')).

An aspect of the teaching process that is a key to students' final success is thesis supervision. In this respect the department offers ample support. According to the self-assessment report, students receive group supervision as well as individual sessions, including a special compulsory course on practical 'BA Thesis Skills' and a thesis outline seminar where students present and defend their potential thesis projects. MA students receive up to 45 hours supervision.

The BA focus on written exams is reflected at the MA level as well. The self-assessment mentions 'term papers' and these may very well exist but they do not feature in the course descriptions. At the MA level the sat-exams-only format is unusual in similar programmes elsewhere. That seminars take the back seat is indirectly corroborated by the Studiebarometer where the figure for seminars at UiA is 2.6 compared to a national 3.4. In the Studiebarometer the Agder students' score for the degree of how much of their studies consists of 'group-work without teacher' is substantially higher (2.6) than the national figure (1.5). Still, the character of the written exam questions provided via the course websites is satisfactory, with an emphasis on 'discuss' and 'analyse' questions. In this sense there is coherence between course content and assessment methods.

An important feature regarding MA level quality is the character of the reading lists. Normally, one would expect academic journals to dominate the reading lists at this level, but that is not the case in Agder. The ST 400 course reading list contains one single book, the ORG 411-1 two books and a compendium, ST 418-1 one book, while the ORG 445-1 includes one book and many articles. Still, just as is the case at the BA level, the MA programme includes aspects designed to help students to develop research abilities. Workshops, links to teachers' own research projects are among the methods.

The courses as such on the MA programme appear to be well structured and put together. Almost all coordinating teachers hold a PhD and there is a strong professor presence.

At the PhD level most aspects are of a kind that would be expected by a PhD programme. Teaching and assessment methods include seminars, workshops and papers (see e.g. the ST 600 course website) and the reading lists are ambitious, pertinent and at a high academic level.

5.5 Learning environment in study programmes

Apart from the programme activities the self-assessment report lists a number of additional activities intended to establish a more varied academic environment. All students are invited to an ‘opening of the academic year by a political figure.’ At the BA and MA levels regular talks and debates are organised by the student organisations with departmental co-operation. All students are welcome to attend the department’s research seminars and are also invited to the ‘Eilert salon’ public events. In addition, MA students are invited to an annual study trip to EU institutions.

Whether students actually take advantage of this rather rich variety of activities is not mentioned in the report but the opportunities certainly exist, also during the summer. Students seem to be satisfied with the social as well as the academic environment. Figures in Studiebarometeret range from 4.3 and 3.9 at the BA level (national: 3.8/3.7) to 4.1/4.1 at the MA level (national: 4.0/3.9). The students are equally happy about the physical environment with satisfaction levels typically at or above 4.0 (for both the BA and MA levels), which is slightly higher than the national averages.

5.6 Educational competence

Both the BA and MA teachers are tied to a range of research fields with relevance to the programmes’ focus. Some teachers are very active researchers with a string of publications, others are currently less active with no recent research publications at all (according to information from UiA websites). 70 percent of the BA and 90 percent of the MA teachers hold a PhD degree (100 percent of PhD teachers). The self-assessment report does not provide information about the PhD programme in this regard, but the PhD programme coordinator is highly qualified and very research active (see the PhD programme website).

As for pedagogical skills and training the self-assessment report underlines that there is ‘a tension between prioritizing research or teaching competence/experience.’ The department’s strategy is to select candidates with ‘both research and teaching skills.’ The self-assessment reports highlights that the UiA offers pedagogical courses for teaching staff. About half of the teaching staff has completed at least some of these. At the same time, it is not entirely clear what constitutes ‘a course’ and what they include, nor whether regular refresher courses are offered. Briefly, a ‘learning centre’ is mentioned in the report but its status and the extent to which teachers actually use it is unclear.

The department has recently begun a cooperating pedagogical project with the UC Berkeley and the department is taking steps to set up a programme with scholars at the Center of Higher Education and the Center for Teaching and Learning at UC Berkeley, aiming at addressing several pedagogical topics. A positive institutional feature is that UiA has engaged a UCB professor for two years as a professor II (20 percent). Moreover, the UiA pedagogics unit will design a pedagogical course for the department’s entire staff.

In sum, there appears to be a budding sense of pedagogical focus and organisation. At the same time, there is still some distance to cover for the organisation of pedagogical training and educational competence to be firmly in place. Pedagogical courses are offered but half the teaching staff is more or less without any pedagogical training. No real analysis is offered on how to recruit pedagogically qualified staff but the Berkeley contacts are being developed and the department appears to be about to tackle its pedagogical issues.

5.7 Achieved learning

Whether students actually achieve the various skills and knowledge taught at the BA and MA levels is difficult to assess given the information provided. However, according to the UiA data package, the number of BA students who ‘fail’ at exams was at 6.8 percent in 2017 compared to 7.7 percent nationally. Moreover, the top A and B grades awarded the Agder BA students is slightly lower than the national figure (41.3 percent and 43.8 percent). Finally, students appear to be comparatively satisfied according to figures provided in the Studiebarometer. UiA levels are roughly the same or slightly higher than the national averages in the Studiebarometer (e.g. BA: ‘experience with research and development work’: UiA: 3.5, national: 3.0; ‘cooperative skills’: UiA: 3.9, national: 3.5; ‘innovative thinking’: UiA: 3.9, national: 3.5; MA: ‘profession specific skills: UiA: 3.7, national: 3.4; ‘oral skills: UiA: 3.6, national 3.3).

5.8 Internationalisation

According to the self-assessment report ‘internationalisation is an important dimension’ of the study programmes. The report mentions the fact that several MA courses are taught in English, the share of international students at all levels has been increasing and both the BA and MA programmes offer the possibility of exchange with foreign universities. Combined, approximately 15-17 incoming exchange students are enrolled in the BA or MA programmes in Agder. While roughly 5 percent of the MA students do internships at the EU office of Southern Norway in Brussels and 10 percent participate in international exchange, some 15 percent of the BA students go on exchange abroad.

Regularly, international scholars teach at the MA programme and a new international MA programme is being set up as a joint degree with the Stockholm Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan University and the University of Tampere (Finland). Moreover, two international professor II positions add to the department’s internationalisation.

A factor with potential indirect effects on the degree of internationalisation is the character of the reading lists. As mentioned above under ‘teaching and assessment methods’ the presence of academic journal articles on the reading lists appears to be rather thin on both programmes.

In sum, there are various internationalisation features, primarily at the MA level.

5.9 Relevance

The sections about relevance pertaining to the BA level are quite limited in the self-assessment report. The report mentions that the students are taught analytical skills and that they are exposed to different types of methods. These are fair points. An academic education provides students with many generic skills, such as writing reports, long time and short time planning, oral presentations etc. and this is corroborated by additional information provided by the department. The MA level includes a more hands-on work life ingredient in the form of an optional 10 credit internship course. Moreover, the department is about to launch a ‘master thesis fair’ in collaboration with internship partners and other employer actors, which is a good feature. Finally, in cooperation with the University’s School of Business and Law, the department offers a course in ‘project organisation and administration’ for the public sector.

Agder students appear to be slightly less satisfied than national figures indicate regarding career opportunities. There may be many reasons for this, and these figures always have to be handled carefully. Still, it may be noted that an important aspect of organising teaching aiming at transferable skills are seminars. According to responses by Agder students, seminars are a distinctly less frequently applied teaching method in comparison to the national figures.

In sum, there is certainly some ambition here and, although only briefly described, relevant transferable skills are being taught and trained. Especially the MA level offers a wide range of work life preparation, apart from the obvious ones which an academic university education normally provides.

5.10 Educational leadership

Changes to the programmes and indeed any management to develop them is a joint responsibility between the course managers, programme coordinators and the whole department. New courses and programmes are subject to approval by the department's Head of Department and the Faculty Board (self-assessment report). Exactly how the decision-making is organised is opaque. Relevant actors are involved but the actual processes are difficult to assess. An overarching issue emphasised in the report is the relative lack of resources to employ additional staff. An aspect of relevance for leadership is that the report specifically mentions the need for resources to ensure sufficient time for programme maintenance and quality improvement. Moreover, the report states that 'the overall competence/grading level (among the UiA students) is lower than at the older universities.' Whether the observations about the students' competences are correct or not is difficult to know. The 'fail' percentages are actually slightly lower than the national average and the share of 'A'/'B' grades a little higher than the national average

5.11 Overall assessment of the quality of the education

Agder offers well-structured programmes at all levels (BA/MA/PhD). The courses are well put together and the students receive a lot of supervision and teaching. The programmes offer training in a range of skills and methods. Moreover, students are offered quite extensive international exchange opportunities (including incoming students). Kristiansand is a small town, which is reflected in the Agder application and entry score figures, which are slightly lower than the national averages, but not in any alarming way. Moreover, Agder is doing quite a lot to take good care of its new students via various introductory and other activities, including for the MA students.

The panel recommends that the department considers the following points: First, entry requirements are more or less in line with what would be expected. However, the 10 credits research methods entry requirement for the MA programmes is distinctly lower than what many similar programmes would demand. We recommend it be adjusted to 15 credits.

Two, as for programme design we recommend Agder to align the BA and MA programme titles better with the actual course content. The department's strength lies in public administration and this is what the programmes actually offer. Obviously, there are many ways to do this. For instance, at the MA level cutting down the MA thesis from 40 to 30 credits in order to make room for a 10 credit pure politics course may be an option. Alternatively, new names could be given to the BA and MA programmes. Furthermore, we recommend the department to ensure that all stated learning outcomes

for all levels (BA/MA/PhD) are covered by actual course content.

Three, we find that the BA programme's 10 credit research methods and 10 credit bachelor thesis requirements are too low. We recommend 15 credits for each.

Four, while several aspects are quite satisfactory in Agder, we have two strong concerns about teaching and assessment methods. First, at both the BA and MA level, the reading lists are dominated by textbooks rather than by academic articles and books. Obviously, BA introductory courses can benefit a lot from textbooks, but increasingly progression to more advanced analytical levels should be supported by proper academic texts. At the MA level, the current reading lists become a serious liability. We strongly recommend the department to update the BA and MA reading lists. Second, the current assessment forms almost exclusively rely on written exams. We strongly recommend the department to add active participation in seminars to the set of examinations.

Finally, the department mentions that there is 'a tension between prioritizing research or teaching competence/experience.' The stated strategy is to select candidates with 'both research and teaching skills.' However, the current situation is less than satisfactory in both regards. Some teachers are not very research active at all with no recent research publications while at the same time half of the staff does not have any pedagogical training. We strongly recommend the department to make seminars, paper-writing and oral contributions key features of the examination process. In the long term, the new cooperation with UC Berkeley appears to be promising.

6 Political Science at the University of Bergen (UiB)

The University of Bergen was formally established in 1948, but the origin of the university can be traced back to 1825 when the Museum of Bergen was founded. The University of Bergen is a comprehensive university, organised in seven faculties. The Faculty of Social Sciences has seven departments and three research centres, of which two are engaged in offering education in political science.

Study programmes in this evaluation:

- BA in Comparative Politics
- BA in Administration and Organisation Theory
- MA in Comparative Politics
- MA in Administration and Organisation Theory
- MA in Public Administration

University of Bergen						
Study programmes included in the evaluation:		BA in Comp. Pol.	BA in Adm. and Org. Th.	MA in Comp. Pol.	MA in Adm. and Org. Th.	MA in Publ. Adm.
Student population	Number of enrolled students, first year (2017) ²⁶	193	120	30	25	5
	Share of female students, total (2017) ²⁷ .	51,1	57,6	42,2	62,0	50,0
Admission data	Number of study places per year (2017) ²⁸ .	95	86			
	Number of qualified first choice applicants (2017) ²⁹ .	171	121			
	Grade points (2017) ³⁰	42,1	36,3			

26 Students who actually started their studies in 2017 after being offered a study place. Data from Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH): <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

27 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

28 Norwegian: Planlagte studieplasser. Data from The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service (NUCAS): <http://www.samordnaoptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

29 Data from NUCAS: <http://www.samordnaoptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

30 Grade points for the primary certificate quota (Norwegian: ORDF). Grade points are the average of all number grades multiplied by 10. Bonus points may be added, e.g. for science and foreign languages. See full explanation here (Norwegian only):

<http://www.samordnaoptak.no/info/optak/poengberegning/index.html>. Data from NUCAS:

<http://www.samordnaoptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

Output	Completion rates at standard time (% , 2014-2016) ³¹ Per study programme: Average: 48,0	48,1	45,5	48,3	45,5	69,0
	A+B grade percentage (2017) ³²	34,2	27,8	63,8	65,1	60,0

6.1 Organisation and resources

At the University of Bergen, the discipline of political science is organised across two different departments: The Department of Comparative Politics and the Department of Administration and Organisation Theory. Corresponding to this, educational programmes at the BA and MA level exist within comparative politics as well as administration and organisation. Alongside programmes in Norwegian, an English language MA in public administration is run by the Department of Administration and Organisation Theory. The political science environment at the University of Bergen is among the largest in Norway with almost 100 academic staff members across the two departments (including PhD candidates) and a total number of more than 370 students accepted across the study programmes in 2017.

6.2 Initial competence

The University of Bergen offers the highest number of BA study places in political science programmes across the universities included in the evaluation. The BA program in comparative politics accepted over 150 students each of the last three years, while approximately 100 students start the program in administration and organisation. Still, the number of first choice applicants for the programmes is substantially higher than the number of available study places and the entry scores are comparable to other BA programmes in political science with the exception of those located in Oslo and NTNU. Specifically, the entry scores for the regular quota in 2017 were 42.1 for the BA in comparative politics and 36.3 for the BA in administration and organisation theory.

Even though the programmes appear to be able to attract a sufficient number of qualified students, it is noteworthy that a substantial number of students drop out of the programmes without finishing their BA. The completion rates (according to the self-assessment) are 51 percent for the BA in administration and organisation and 58 percent for the BA in comparative politics. Although these numbers are higher than the faculty average, it still reflects that a large number of students does not complete their programme. It is therefore worth considering whether the students dropping out are those with the lowest entry score. On this basis, it may be considered whether the programmes could be strengthened by limiting the number of study places somewhat and in consequence achieving a higher entry score for students.

31 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

32 All A and B grades as a percentage of all grades given at the study programme. Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

For all three MA programmes, the admission requirement is a completed BA with a relevant specialisation. For the two Norwegian language programmes, students are required to have methods training as part of their previous education. For the English language programme, a 4-year BA with 1.5 years of relevant courses is required. It is not clear to what degree the admission requirements differ in practice and what the reasoning behind such differences may be. It is particularly noticeable that methods training is not a requirement for the English language programme and not listed as a criterion that will be taken into account when choosing among qualified applicants.

When it comes to introductory activities for new students, the self-assessment describes extensive activities aiming at introducing new BA students to their studies. These include social activities such as movies and lunches as well as introductions to the study programmes, library resources and academic writing. In addition, in the first year both programmes emphasise the use of small-group seminars and mandatory paper assignments in the course of the semester. These are well-chosen instruments to ensure that students become integrated in the university environment. While there is a dedicated effort to introduce students to their studies, it is less clear to what extent new BA students are able to meet and interact with academic staff in the beginning of their studies. The use of student instructors clearly has advantages and allows new students to meet older students with recent experience from the same programme. Still, in order to integrate new BA students into the academic environment it is also crucial that students have opportunities to regularly meet and interact with faculty members.

The two departments also arrange introductory activities for new MA students including social as well as academic activities. Both departments arrange activities such as a breakfast or lunch and provide students with opportunities to meet faculty. At the MA level, there seems to be a particularly strong focus on integrating students into the department and encouraging interaction with staff members. This is laudable as the programmes are research oriented and therefore highly dependent on options for interaction between students and staff.

6.3 Programme design

All the study programmes included in the evaluation have clear and well-developed learning outcome statements with a focus on theory, application and academic reasoning within the respective fields. Learning outcomes for the MA programmes are generally at a more advanced level than for the BA programmes. Still, it is apparent that the learning outcome statements for the different programmes have been developed in separate processes. Prospective students may benefit from an effort to coordinate the learning outcome statements, where different language is used for what presumably are similar competencies. It is also noticeable that the learning outcome statement for the MA in public administration is clearly less ambitious than the corresponding statements for the two other MA programmes.

At the BA level, the learning outcome statements are consistently implemented in specific outcome statements for individual courses. There is clear progression in the course curricula with an increasing emphasis on international research literature over time. The programmes are thus well-designed in regard to meeting the overall learning outcome statements. With respect to programme design, the BA programmes combine mandatory courses with a number of electives. The mandatory courses provide a good foundation for students by introducing them to both methods and core areas within the respective

fields. Courses are usually taught by researchers with own experience within the field and the elective courses offered reflect the fields of expertise at the two departments.

The MA programmes are strongly focused on research design and methodology, which is well-aligned with the learning outcomes for the study programmes. With respect to programme design, the MA programmes are highly structured with one year of mostly mandatory courses and a full year dedicated to the master project. In fact, with the emphasis on methods courses and a one year master project, the credits devoted to courses focused on subjects within the disciplines is rather limited. This may be a point of discussion especially with respect to students who enter the MA with a BA degree from other programmes than the ones offered by UiB.

The study programmes are anchored in departments with strong research traditions within their respective fields. In particular, the courses and curricula in the programmes in organisation and administration are highly influenced by the Norwegian approach to organisation theory, where Bergen faculty members have been strong contributors. This is a core strength of the programme, but possibly also a future challenge in securing continuous development of the programme.

While the programmes in comparative politics are described as focused on one sub-discipline within political science, they do cover many of the most central aspects within the discipline of political science, especially through the range of electives offered. Also, while a core of faculty is concerned with comparative politics, there are also more widespread political science competencies at the department including subjects such as political behaviour and political theory. The department is therefore in a position where it would be possible to offer a full-scale political science program, particularly if cooperation with other departments was considered.

According to the Studiebarometer, students at both the bachelor and master level generally find their studies academically challenging and evaluate courses as well connected and integrated. At the BA level, students rate the connecting and integration of courses at 3.8, while MA students have an average score of 3.9 in regard to this question. It is noticeable that MA students are more positive than BA students when asked whether the programme design stimulates their motivation for working with their studies. Here, BA students on average score 3.4 which is below the level for MA students as well as the national average for BA students. This may therefore be a point of attention.

6.4 Teaching and assessment methods

The BA programmes generally consist of courses where students will attend lectures as well as seminar sessions in smaller groups. Lectures are taught by faculty members, while most seminar groups are organised by student instructors. Students follow two to three courses per semester and the number of class hours vary somewhat across courses. In general, the number of class hours is not very high according to the time tables available on the university's webpage. A student in the BA programme in administration and organisation will for example have a total of about 60 class hours per semester based on the number of class hours in mandatory courses. Students report spending about nine weekly hours in classes and 20.6 hours on other study related activities. Compared to the national average, Bergen students report a lower number of hours organised in classes.

At the MA level, the number of students in each programme is smaller and courses typically have a seminar format with academic faculty teaching. According to the time tables, MA courses have

between eight and 12 sessions of two hours each. This teaching format corresponds well to the focus on developing research skills in the MA programmes.

Students writing their BA thesis are offered four meetings with individual supervision, while students writing their MA thesis have access to 10 individual supervision meetings. In addition, more collective forms of supervision are offered. This is particularly crucial in the MA programmes where 60 ECTS are devoted to the MA thesis.

With respect to assessment methods, it is worth noting that mandatory assignments throughout the semester are used in many courses. These include group papers, oral presentations and individual essays. As noted by the institution, using class participation as part of course assessment raises some formal issues, but has clear pedagogical advantages. Both departments have made efforts to diversify assessment methods. In all programmes a range of different exam forms are used. Still, it is noticeable that many mandatory courses are evaluated by school exams and at the BA level oral exams are not used.

In the Studiebarometer, students report that lectures, seminars and written assignments are common teaching and learning methods. It is noticeable that MA students report a much lower use of lectures than the national average reflecting the high emphasis on seminar teaching in the MA programmes. BA students report less use of project work and more of digital work methods than at other universities. Students at both levels agree that exams and assignments concern central curriculum, require understanding and reasoning and stimulate reflection and critical thinking.

6.5 Learning environment in study programmes

The self-assessment report describes a vibrant learning environment with debate events, student excursions and other activities organised by students and supported by the university. For master students, the departments seem to play a more active role for example with the integration of MA students into activities organised by research groups at the Department of Administration and Organisation. This is a very valuable way for MA students to be closely involved with the academic environment.

Students at the University of Bergen generally rate different aspects of the learning environment slightly lower than the national average in the Studiebarometer. The largest deviation is present for the question 'how satisfied are you with the environment between the students and the academic staff in the programme', where Bergen BA students have a rate of 3.1 compared to a national average of 3.5. Also, the BA students in Bergen are less satisfied than the average student with the academic environment among the students. MA students are more positive than BA students in regard to most questions. These results indicate that there is some room for improvement in ensuring that BA students interact with academic staff.

6.6 Educational competence

The educational competence of faculty is high with teachers usually being active researchers within the field of their teachings. Most faculty members routinely publish in both Norwegian and English outlets and especially with respect to electives the subjects of these are typically closely related to the specialisation of the teacher. The educational competence of applicants to vacant positions is included

in the process of appointing new faculty. It is particularly noticeable that candidates are invited to trial teaching sessions or lectures prior to their appointment. This is a crucial instrument in ensuring that educational competence is included in the hiring process.

The University of Bergen has a program for university pedagogy providing educational training for both staff and students with teaching responsibility. All new faculty members are required to attend a course in university pedagogy within two years of being hired. While other staff and student instructors are also offered pedagogical training, it is not clear whether this is mandatory for example for student instructors. At the Department of Comparative politics about 75-80 percent of academic staff has pedagogical training, while a similar number for the Department of Administration and Organisation is not available.

In both departments, discussions about pedagogy and teaching take place in collegiate forums such as supervisor fora, staff meetings and working groups. There seems to be high emphasis on the continuous improvement of study programmes and individual courses. Also, there is public recognition of good teaching in the shape of a “quality of education” award.

6.7 Achieved learning

Students at the University of Bergen take an average of 42.6 credits per semester, which is slightly above the national average. While 43.8 percent of students receive a grade of A or B across all political science study programmes, this is the case for 50.2 percent of students at UiB. However, the variation between the BA and MA programmes are significant. Also, nationally 7.7 percent of students fail their exams, while 2.9 percent of students at UiB do not pass exams (also in this case there are differences between MA and BA programmes). These figures raise a potential issue with respect to the level of achieved learning. While a system of external examiners serves to ensure some level of consistency across institutions, it is however highly questionable whether differences in the share of students obtaining high grades indicate differences in achieved learning.

According to Studiebarometer, BA students’ satisfaction with their learning outcomes correspond very closely to the national average in most respects. Students are slightly more satisfied with their acquired knowledge of scientific work methods and research and their written communication skills, and somewhat less with their oral communication skills (3.0 compared to a national average of 3.3). This may reflect that the exam formats in the BA programmes are mainly four to six hour written exams and that oral exams are generally not used. Introducing oral exams could be considered as an instrument for increasing student learning in this respect.

At the MA level, the emphasis of research in the study programmes is reflected in a score of 4.1 (national average 3.9) in respect to knowledge of scientific work methods and research and a score of 3.8 (national average 3.4) when it comes to experience with research and development work. On the other hand, students rate their satisfaction with their cooperative skills, oral communication skills and innovative thinking lower (3.3-3.4). These results seem to indicate that the skills acquired by students closely reflect the learning outcomes of the programmes. While the departments may consider whether students could learn more in terms of cooperation and communication, this should not be at the expense of the skills currently emphasised.

6.8 Internationalisation

The two departments emphasise internationalisation in terms of faculty composition, courses and study programmes in English and exchange opportunities for students. The faculty includes staff representing many different nationalities and it is particularly noticeable that the departments have been successful in recruiting good international scholars at the senior level.

With respect to internationalisation of courses and readings, the programmes appear integrated in the international disciplines, although the BA in organisation and administration has a particular emphasis on Norwegian contributions to organisational theory. There is clear progression in the course literature assigned at different levels and at the more advanced levels reading lists incorporate recent international literature.

At all levels, study programmes are designed to allow for exchange opportunities. Two semesters with electives are integrated into both BA programmes, and students can choose to take these courses at other universities. Even though the MA programmes are very structured, it is also possible to spend a semester abroad at the MA level. A large number of courses are taught in English allowing for incoming exchange students and with the MA in public administration, the department also attracts international full degree students. Exchange options are prominently figured on the websites informing about the study programmes and exchange agreements exist with many good schools across the world. Still, there is a potential for further exchange agreements for example in the US and UK.

In the period 2010-16, an average of 26.5 percent of students in the programmes in administration and organisation did an exchange abroad, while approximately 52 percent of students enrolled in the comparative politics study programmes were on exchange as part of their study programme. Both departments also receive incoming exchange students with the department of comparative politics having a particularly large group of incoming students, although the numbers have dropped somewhat in the later years.

6.9 Relevance

Students graduating with a degree in comparative politics or administration and organisation theory have substantial insight in political processes as well as crucial skills in regard to analysing and processing large amounts of data. With the large emphasis on methodological skills and strong components of methods at the MA level, students with a MA from UiB are particularly competitive with respect to methodological skills and working with empirical data. As reported by both departments, these skills are highly valued by employers.

In addition to these general social science skills, the programmes also emphasise additional more directly work-related skills. In the BA programme in administration and organisation theory, specific cases are often used for assignments and exams, which may increase the relevance of the education. In the BA in comparative politics, relevance is enhanced by offering credit awarding internship courses in the Bergen region as well as Brussels. In addition, efforts have recently been made to increase the digital skills of students. Approximately 20 percent of students in the comparative politics bachelor enrol in credit awarding internships. Similar estimates are not available for the BA in administration and organisation theory.

One consideration in respect to the overall skills acquired in the two programmes is to what extent these differ across the two programmes. On the department's webpages student testimonies are used to provide students with an impression of possible future jobs, but no statistics about the future occupations of students are provided. It is, however, noticeable that the graduates from both programmes seem to exemplify the same type of classic political science jobs. This is not a problem per se, but it may be possible to clarify to potential and current students to what extent future job opportunities differ across the programmes. In particular, for students in the administration and organisation programme it may be relatively clear that a main job market will be the public sector, while students in the comparative politics programme may possibly have a more vague idea about future occupations.

When asked questions regarding relevance in the Studiebarometer, the responses by students at the University of Bergen are slightly below the national average. For example, responses from BA students on average have a score of 3.8 and those of MA students have a score of 3.9 when asked whether their study programme provides competence that is generally useful in occupational life. On the other hand, the students (particularly at the bachelor level) are more positive than students at other universities concerning whether there is cooperation with workplaces in the labour market.

6.10 Educational leadership

The development of study programmes and individual courses seems to be a crucial priority for the department leadership. In the self-assessment and in the additional information from the university, many examples support the impression that the departments are working continually to improve the quality of education. In addition, the faculty appears to be involved in the development of educational quality as issues related to teaching are discussed in different fora with faculty representation.

6.11 Overall assessment of the quality of the education

The study programmes at the University of Bergen are generally very good. There is a clear link between overall learning outcomes and the design of the programmes as well as the individual courses. The two departments have highly qualified staff including a number of internationally recruited scholars and courses are generally taught by active scholars within the field of courses. The panel recommends that the following points are considered by the departments:

First, the total number of study places is high compared to the other universities included in the evaluation. The panel recommends that the departments analyse whether students accepted with a relatively low GPA have a higher propensity to get low grades and drop out of the programme. On this basis, it may be considered to reduce the number of offered study places.

Second, the opportunity for BA students to meet and interact with staff members is a further point of attention. The number of class hours is relatively low and student instructors are responsible for part of the teaching. Also, students are less satisfied than at other universities with the academic environment between staff and students.

Third, the balance between different exam formats could be considered. In particular, introducing more oral exams in mandatory courses would benefit the ability of students to acquire skills in oral presentation.

Fourth, from an international perspective the variation in focus on methods skills at the BA level and MA level is striking. While the programmes offered at the University of Bergen offers more methods training at the BA level than some other programmes, it is still worth considering the balance between methods and substantive courses at the different levels.

Finally, the organisation of political science related programmes across two different departments creates a need for coordination across the department. It would thus be beneficial for prospective and present students to clarify similarities and differences for example in learning outcome statements, admission criteria and job opportunities.

7 Political Science at the University of Oslo (UiO)

The University of Oslo is the oldest university in Norway, founded in 1811. The university is a comprehensive research university, with eight faculties, in addition to museums and collections, and a university library. The Faculty of Social Sciences was established as a faculty in 1963, but several of the social science disciplines were previously taught at other faculties. The Faculty of Social Sciences consists of five departments, four centres, and one prioritized area. Political science is located in the Department of Political Science.

Study programmes in this evaluation

- BA in Political Science
- MA in Political Science
- PhD in Social Science

University of Oslo			
Study programmes included in the evaluation:		BA in Political Science	MA in Political Science
Student population	Number of enrolled students, first year (2017) ³³	162	105
	Share of female students, total (2017) ³⁴	60,1	53,4
Admission data	Number of study places per year (2017) ³⁵	155	
	Number of qualified first choice applicants (2017) ³⁶	378	
	Grade points (2017) ³⁷	48,3	
Output	Completion rates at standard time (% , 2014-2016) ³⁸ Per study programme: Average: 45,2	41,3	50,6
	A+B grade percentage (2017) ³⁹	47,1	47,3

33 Students who actually started their studies in 2017 after being offered a study place. Data from Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH): <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

34 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

35 Norwegian: Planlagte studieplasser. Data from The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service (NUCAS): <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

36 Data from NUCAS: <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

37 Grade points for the primary certificate quota (Norwegian: ORDF). Grade points are the average of all number grades multiplied by 10. Bonus points may be added, e.g. for science and foreign languages. See full explanation here (Norwegian only): <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/opptak/poengberegning/index.html>. Data from NUCAS:

<http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

38 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

39 All A and B grades as a percentage of all grades given at the study programme. Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

7.1 Organisation and resources

Two political science programmes of the University of Oslo are included in this evaluation: one BA program (three years) and one MA program (two years). The Department of Political Science (ISV) at UiO also manages a special one-year program in political science (for 60 EC), the political science component of the PhD Programme of the Faculty of Social Sciences (hereafter ‘Faculty’) as well as two multidisciplinary BA programmes (Public Administration and Management, and International Studies), and one multidisciplinary English master’s programme (Peace and Conflict Studies). With 1100 students in total in 2015/16 the ISV is a relatively large department. The BA and MA programmes are classical political science programmes which aim at providing students with knowledge about all sub-disciplines of political science. The website shows 92 staff members (including PhD-students, post-docs and support staff).

7.2 Initial competence

The BA attracts a relatively high number of students and there are more applicants than can be accepted (2.4 students for each available place as compared to 2.1 students per available place nationally). According to the 2017 admission data the BA programme at UiO had the largest number of study places (155) as compared to other BA programmes in political science programs. The entry score (GPA limit regular quota) for the BA was 48.3 in 2017, which is high compared to the national average of 42.8. The gender balance in the BA is somewhat skewed towards the female students.

The Faculty of Social Sciences organises a buddy week for new BA students. In addition, the Department of Political Science (ISV) organises information meetings and social academic events. In that way the ISV takes community building seriously, which is important in terms of creating a good learning environment. ISV also organises activities that highlight the (societal) relevance of political science. A single course (STV1000) is offered to get students acquainted with the ISV and academic life more broadly. In the light of the many activities mentioned above and the high entry scores it is worrying that the dropout rate of BA students is relatively high. The arguments made in the self-assessment that dropping out is ‘a rational decision for many young people’ and that the costs are low should not give reason for complacency. The management could think about ways to achieve a better match between prospective BA students and the programme.

The MA programme is popular as well (500 applicants on 110 study places). The gender balance in the MA is almost 50/50. In order to be admitted to the program, prospective students must have an average grade of C or more, at least 80 EC related to political science of which 20 EC at an advanced level and 10 EC related to methodology. Whereas the ISV seems to be very active in welcoming and organising community building activities for BA students, that seems to be to a much lesser extent the case for the MA program. In the additional information provided by the department, it is communicated that there is an information meeting during the semester start week, which includes a presentation by the UiO Career Services office. Although, the MA student council organises social events which are coordinated with the teaching activities in the first week of the academic year, there do not seem to be many activities aimed at community building in the MA. The management may consider introducing similar activities as in the BA in order to create group belonging in the MA as well. The ISV mentions in the self-assessment report that the methodology skills of some students entering the MA programme are not as good as expected. The department seems to have addressed

this issue adequately by offering an online refresher course in order to prepare for STV4020A, which many students consider to be a difficult course.

7.3 Programme design

The BA program is well structured and includes all sub-disciplines of political science. The department's website mentions political theory, international politics, comparative politics, public policy and administration, and research methods. Most staff members are in comparative politics (20 tagged as such on the English website and 27 on the Norwegian website). In terms of the type of courses there seems to be an emphasis on international relations in the MA. The students find the programme challenging (4.3) and the programme scores well on integration (4.0). It scores average (3.6) regarding to which extent students become motivated. The learning outcomes of the individual courses are clearly formulated and show reasonable progression from the BA to the MA level.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are included in the curriculum for a methods course of 10 EC. For a classical department of political science that is a bit low. Methodology is possibly be integrated in the substantive political science courses, but this is not clear from the self-assessment or website. The same observation about the EC can be made with respect to the BA-thesis which is rewarded with 10 EC. Both the amount of EC for the methodology and BA-thesis are modest in international comparison. BA theses in similar programmes at European departments of political science often have 15 or 20 EC. The modest amount of ECs reserved for methodology and the thesis may limit alumni from the BA to enter MA programmes abroad. Also the claim made in the self-assessment that the BA program gets more specialised throughout the curriculum speaks in favour of allocating more EC for methodology and the BA thesis. A thesis with a higher number of EC would also be in line with increased division of work between the introductory and specialisation levels described in the self-assessment.

The MA programme reflects the classical nature of the department and thus it connects well with the BA program. In the Studiebarometer it scores just below average on integration (3.8) and the ability to get students motivated to study (3.5), but students find the programme very challenging (4.4). The MA contains specialised political science courses across all sub-disciplines and room for electives, also outside of politics. The methodology component is well represented. 30 EC are related to methodology. The MA thesis is rewarded with 50 EC, which includes a design seminar and a counseling seminar. This means that there are 40 EC left for the substantive courses. According to the additional information provided by the management, the learning outcomes at the programme level serve as 'a framework within which academic staff can develop their individual courses.' Although this seems to be voluntary and it is unclear to what extent the management takes responsibility for assuring that this is actually done, the panel did not see signs that there would be problems with the implementation of this framework.

7.4 Teaching and assessment

Both BA and MA students are satisfied with the teaching and assessment methods in relation to covering the central parts of the curriculum, requiring understanding and reasoning and stimulating reflection and critical thinking. The student satisfaction rates correspond largely with the national satisfaction rates. At the same time it seems that traditional ways of teaching dominate in both

programmes. The additional information makes clear that the ‘traditional school exam’ is the most common exam. The school exam is regularly combined with a term paper. Further, academic staff is encouraged to explore other assessment methods and differentiate in assessment methods. Qualification tests (in the form of essays or knowledge tests) are used to determine whether students can be allowed to do the exam proper.

According to the self-assessment the faculty funds the development of new educational and assessment methods. It is unclear from the self-assessment and the course descriptions what these exactly are and to what degree they have been implemented. Moreover, students indicate that there are more lectures than seminars in the MA program (4.9 as compared to 4.4 nationally in the Studiebarometer). One would expect a more small scale educational approach in the MA. There is little evidence of digitalization, for example in the form of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) or Small Private Online Courses (SPOCs). An exception is the BA course STV2500 (on EU decision-making), which is based on a MOOC and applies a ‘flipped classroom’ approach. Further, most BA lectures are recorded and made available as podcast to the students.

There seems to be an adequate amount of time reserved for thesis supervision. At the BA-level the student writes the thesis in a group setting. This implies that the amount of supervision is similar to the supervision given in the case of term papers. At the MA level 10 individual meetings with a supervisor are offered over two semesters. Supervisors are granted 48 hours for supervision in total per student, which is more than sufficient. Students dedicate 32.9 hours to their study, which is considerably higher than the national average of 29.3. The readings include textbooks, but also advanced academic articles, especially in the later phase of the BA and in the MA.

7.5 Learning environment in study programmes

In general the students are relatively satisfied with the learning environment. Some attention is probably needed regarding the environment among students and the academic staff (a score of 3.3 versus 3.8 nationally) in the MA programme. This may have to do with the tendency to primarily teach by way of lectures. More small-scale teaching methods could remedy this. Further, there is due attention for developing the student community, which the ISV supports financially and takes initiatives by organising events. Research seems to be well connected to teaching. The website shows that ISV has a large and active research staff. The link between teaching and research is also evident in the link between the research methods course (STV1020) and the final BA thesis (STV3090). The libraries and facilities in Oslo are adequate and the students’ approval rates are (close to) national average.

The policy to deal with contingencies such as illness of staff members was described in the additional information. In case of short term absence classes are normally postponed. In the case of long-term absence, courses are sometimes canceled. This is not the case for mandatory courses, which in case of absence are taken over by another member of the academic staff. The size of the department ensures that illness does not necessarily disrupt the staffing of courses to the extent that the learning environment is negatively affected.

7.6 Educational competence

All academic staff (except PhD-fellows) is obliged to acquire basic pedagogical competence within two years of employment. Applicants for academic positions in the department must give trial lectures, which are attended by staff members and students. Referees are consulted on teaching capabilities of job applicants and basic educational competence is required for permanent positions. Program leaders are required to complete the education leadership course. However, there is no evidence of courses which other staff members can take in order to improve their teaching skills. Courses on, for example, new digital teaching methods or on teaching large(r) classrooms could be offered by the department and/or by the faculty.

There seems to be quite some informal exchange of experiences, for example through the Educational Forum. However, more formalized mechanisms would be welcome. Such formalized mechanisms are important in the light of the observation in the self-assessment that ‘greater emphasis is placed on scientific qualifications than educational qualifications’ in the employment procedures. According to the self-assessment, the ISV occasionally uses non-PhD teaching staff, including master students. It is unclear how the quality of teaching is assured in these cases and how this relates to the general requirement of ‘basic educational competence’.

Educational competence is strengthened by the publication record of the staff. Most staff members publish in English and seem to maintain international networks. A strong connection between research and teaching is present as evidenced by the similarity of themes and topics appearing in the teaching lists of individual staff members on the one hand, and their publications and research interests on the other.

7.7 Achieved learning

According to the Studiebarometer, overall achieved learning outcomes are often below average in the MA. In the BA the scores are slightly better. The MA scores particularly lower on discipline specific or profession specific skills (2.5/3.0). Also, experience with research and development work merits attention in both programmes, but especially in the MA, because one would expect that research and education is more integrated in a graduate program. It is positive that the ISV encourages MA students to link their MA thesis to research projects of staff members. The fraction of students getting A/B grades is higher than the national average. While a system of external examiners serves to ensure some level of consistency across institutions, it is still highly questionable whether differences in the share of students obtaining high grades indicate differences in achieved learning. The failure rate is below national average. The number of credits per student on a yearly basis is 39.7, which is below the national average.

7.8 Internationalisation

Apparently internationalisation is mainly understood in terms of sending students abroad on exchange programmes and receiving foreign students in own programmes. Students in the BA are enabled to go on exchange for an entire spring or autumn semester. From the additional information provided by the department it becomes clear that 23 bachelor students (15 percent) took advantage of the exchange option in 2016. For the MA the number was 21 out of 110 (19 percent of the students). In the same year, the department received 45 students from abroad (across all programmes).

Next to the focus on exchange, a substantial number of courses in the BA is offered in English. There is even a special course for foreign students on Nordic politics. Nonetheless, the Norwegian language dominates the curriculum. The staff of the department is also primarily Norwegian. Whereas it is understandable that an undergraduate program has Norwegian as the primary language of teaching, international developments in higher education (increased mobility of students across borders) would plea for more English language courses or perhaps even an English language specialisation.

That is even more the case for the MA. Currently, half of the optional courses in the MA programme are offered in English. It would make sense to increase the number of courses in English in the MA programme and/or offer a specialisation in English. This would not only attract foreign students, but also prepare Norwegian students better for professions in a globalized world. It would probably also attract more international staff. The latter seems relevant for the ISV being a leading political science department in Norway. Compared to similar departments in other European countries it is not very international regarding the composition of staff.

7.9 Relevance

The BA and MA are classical political science programmes with a focus on generating (BA) and deepening (MA) knowledge and methodological skills in political science. As such the program is orientated towards a broad range of professions. Like political science programmes in general, the BA and MA do not prepare students for a specific career. However, attention is drawn to post-academic life in the sense that the ISV aims to prepare students for the job market by offering the opportunity to develop generic skills. The self-assessment mentions that ‘employers who employ graduates from the UiO place particular emphasis on the ability of graduates to work in a team, their ability to be able to work independently, their ability to acquire new knowledge, their analytical skills, and their oral and written presentation skills’.

Although these qualifications refer to the UiO in general and not to the BA and MA programmes of political science in particular, the curriculum (including the educational and assessment methods) shows that these generic skills are indeed offered to the students. Moreover, the additional information shows that both the BA and MA include transferable skills, such as critical reflection, oral and written communication skills, ability to plan and carry out independent analysis for the BA, and deep knowledge of advanced methodological tools, ability to acquire knowledge and information in rational systematic and critical manner for the MA. In its reflection on the relevance of its programmes, ISV writes that there is improvement potential ‘as regards developing the ability of both BA and MA students to work in a team’. There are no concrete plans mentioned to actually achieve this.

The Studiebarometer shows that BA students are quite satisfied with the relevance of the programme. The programme scores 4.1 (national average 4.0) regarding the question to what extent the BA ‘provides competence that is generally useful in occupational live’. The MA scores less well in comparison to the BA. Especially the cooperation with workplaces in the labour market could be improved, having a score of 2.4 as compared to 2.9 nationally. In this respect it seems wise to make more use of the work opportunities panel that helps the management to connect the programmes to the needs of the labour market. Further, the new MA course STV4141 ‘Praksis’ seems to be very promising in improving cooperation with the labour market. The e-guide description shows that during a six weeks stay in the host institution students learn to use state of the art methodology and theory in practice. It also includes the practice of generic skills, such as self-reflection, collaboration and

communication, and delivering oral presentations. The recently included internship option in the MA also seems promising in improving the relevance of the program. In 2016-2017 the internship option was used by 10 percent of the MA students. The management aims at increasing this number to 20 percent for 2017-2018.

7.10 Educational leadership

Academic leadership is involved in the development of the BA and MA programmes at all levels. Teaching is planned in four different educational areas, each headed by an area supervisor. The area supervisors are responsible for developing the study programmes together with support staff from the programme council. The programme council, which is chaired by the head of educational affairs and who cooperates closely with the head of department, must approve course descriptions (which include course content, learning outcomes and a description of the way(s) the course is examined). Changes in the course description after the initial approval, need to be approved by the programme council. The programme leaders are required to take the educational leadership course. The quality assurance of educational leadership depends on good cooperation between the head of educational affairs and the head of department, as well as cooperation between head of educational affairs and the program managers of the multidisciplinary programmes of the faculty in which the ISV participates. Based on the available material, there are no signs that this cooperation needs substantial improvement. There is evidence that educational leadership leads to rethinking parts of the curriculum and concrete initiatives, such as the new MA course STV4141 'Praksis' and the online methodology refresher course in the MA programme. In general this seems to be a good structure for educational leadership.

7.11 Overall assessment of the quality of the education

Overall the UiO offers two strong political science programmes. The curriculum is well designed and the learning outcomes are well chosen and implemented in the individual courses and the programmes as a whole. The UiO has a highly qualified staff that connects research to teaching in a way that can be expected from a leading department of political science in Norway. The programmes offered are relevant and provide good training for political science students. The department gives due attention to the labour market. Initiatives such as the new MA course STV4141 'Praksis' seem to be very promising in improving cooperation with the labour market. In addition to the BA and MA programmes, which are part of this evaluation, the ISV also contributes to the recently successfully evaluated PhD program of the faculty.

There are some possible points for improvement. First, the dropout rates in the BA should get the attention of the management. A means to decrease the number of dropouts, may be thinking about ways to make a better match between prospective BA students and the programme. One of the ways to do that is to not only provide passive information about the programme to the students, but also to collect more information about the skills and knowledge of the prospective students prior to the start of their studies.

Second, the panel recommends the programme management to introduce activities that aim to create group belonging in the MA programme. The MA programme is well organised in terms of the programme design, but could benefit from more attention to community building efforts. In addition, more attention to the connection between students and staff in the MA would be beneficial. The ISV

runs a relatively large MA programme which obviously limits the options of personal interaction. However, more small-scale seminar style teaching instead of lectures should be possible. Innovative teaching methods, such as ‘flipping the classroom’, could perhaps be helpful.

Third, whereas the MA is very strong regarding methodology and has a large amount of ECs dedicated to the final thesis, these elements could be strengthened in the BA. The modest amount of ECs reserved for methodology and the thesis may limit alumni from the BA to enter MA programmes abroad.

Fourth, more innovative teaching and assessment methods would be beneficial. There is very little evidence of digitalization and the traditional school exam seems to be the most common type of assessment. Although traditional school exams are quite common in Norwegian universities and abroad, more diversity would be advantageous. More diversity would connect with recent didactic developments in higher education.

Finally, although the department is rather international as compared to many other political science departments in Norway, it could do more. It would make sense to increase the number of courses in English (especially in the MA programme) and/or offer a specialisation in English. This could not only contribute to attract foreign students, but also to improve the preparation of Norwegian students for professions in a globalized world. It would probably also serve to attract more international staff.

8 Political Science at the University of Stavanger (UiS)

The University of Stavanger was founded in 2005, when Stavanger University College of Applied Sciences was granted status as a university. Recently, there has been a reorganisation process, and the university is currently organised in six faculties.

The Faculty of Social Sciences has about 180 employees who work in two departments and at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management. The thematic profile of the faculty includes sociology, political science, media and journalism, hotel management, change management, risk management and societal safety, and social work.

Study programmes in this evaluation

- BA in Political Science

University of Stavanger		
Study programmes included in the evaluation:		BA in Political Science
Student population	Number of enrolled students, first year (2017) ⁴⁰	59
	Share of female students, total (2017) ⁴¹	47,2
Admission data	Number of study places per year (2017) ⁴²	43
	Number of qualified first choice applicants (2017) ⁴³	86
	Grade points (2017) ⁴⁴	40,4
Output	Completion rates at standard time (% , 2014-2016) ⁴⁵	27,1
	A+B grade percentage (2017) ⁴⁶	24,4

40 Students who actually started their studies in 2017 after being offered a study place. Data from Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH): <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

41 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

42 Norwegian: Planlagte studieplasser. Data from The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service (NUCAS): <http://www.samordnaoptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

43 Data from NUCAS: <http://www.samordnaoptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

44 Grade points for the primary certificate quota (Norwegian: ORDF). Grade points are the average of all number grades multiplied by 10. Bonus points may be added, e.g. for science and foreign languages. See full explanation here (Norwegian only): <http://www.samordnaoptak.no/info/optak/poengberegning/index.html>. Data from NUCAS:

<http://www.samordnaoptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

45 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

46 All A and B grades as a percentage of all grades given at the study programme. Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

8.1 Organisation and resources

The University of Stavanger has offered a bachelor degree in political science since 2011. The degree is organised by the Department of Media and Social Sciences, which also offers degrees in, for example, journalism and sociology. Over the years a number of staff has been recruited in order to strengthen the discipline of political science, but some courses are co-taught with other bachelor programmes. The department also benefits from cooperation with the International Research Institute of Stavanger where a significant number of staff works within the social sciences.

8.2 Initial competence

The BA programme in political science has 43 study places, and in 2017 the number of first choice applicants was 86. With an entry score (GPA limit regular quota) of 40.4 for the BA programme in 2017, the programme is one of the easiest programmes to be admitted to among those participating in this evaluation. The students applying for this programme seem to have a specific interest in the two specialisations offered at UiS, which are management (personal ledelse) or risk and emergency management (samfunnssikkerhet).

In the self-assessment highlights that even though Stavanger is the third largest urban region in Norway, UiS has challenges recruiting students. Possible explanations are related to the high living costs in the region and the new programme. The self-assessment also mentions that it has not been possible to use the International Research Institute of Stavanger as a booster for recruitments. The programme is still under development and the staff is to a great extent cooperating with colleagues locally, at other Norwegian universities and internationally and thereby the promotion of the programme is embedded in a larger setting.

When it comes to introductory activities for incoming students, the programme starts with an introduction week and the department collaborates with the university library in introducing new students to the university. The students meet staff and teachers from the political science programme during this week. The student organisation is involved and they contribute through the programme.

8.3 Programme design

The overall learning outcome statement for the programme is well-developed and covers the areas and competencies usually associated with a degree in political science. Specific learning outcomes are also well described in each of the course descriptions. The design of the full programme enhances the main focus on political science and also opens for one of the two specialisations the students can choose to focus on. The department has a 'strategic committee' responsible for coordination across programmes. This may indicate a good way of managing and developing interdisciplinary contributions for the students.

The structure of this BA programme follows a model of general courses during the first year and more options of specialisation during the second and third year. There are three courses per semester and a final thesis (year 3) of 20 credits. This is in line with most programmes in Norway and thus the programme opens for master programmes in political science and equivalent degrees all over Norway. The BA-programme covers most basic political science sub-disciplines and includes some specialisation courses in the second year on environment and energy politics and welfare policies,

which are clearly related to the research in the department. There are two openings for specialisations in the second and third year: management (personalledelse), and risk and emergency management (samfunnssikkerhet).

There are two courses on methods worth 10 credits each. A 10 credit course on research theory and methods (forskningsteori og metode) is included in the first year and a 10 credit course on quantitative methods in the second year. These method courses are provided in collaboration with the programme in sociology. The self-assessment discusses the benefits of this collaboration in the area of social science methods. However, the course descriptions and the self-assessment do not clarify how specific aspects of methods and research design in political science are assured through these courses. There are thesis seminars in semester five and six, where students present and get feedback on their proposal. These seminars emphasise design and methodology for the BA-thesis. There are only three hours for supervision of the BA-thesis. The method courses are quite early in the programme and the students write their thesis in the last semester, thus the thesis seminar will probably play an important role for the use of research methods in the thesis.

The overall model of this quite general BA-programme in political science combines the general curriculum with the research specialisation at the UiS. It is a BA in political science but it also includes more general social science competences. There is a common model in the design of the programme starting out with an introduction on 'politics and power' (10 credits) and 'political theory' (10 credits). The programme includes courses in international politics, theories of democracy and public administration, which are worth 10 credits each.

There are no explicit courses on Norwegian politics or on comparative politics in this programme. The course on 'power and politics' appears to provide an introduction to the Norwegian political system, but it is not apparent how the programme includes comparative politics and thus fulfils the learning outcome on knowledge of the political systems of other countries. However, such aspects may be included, as indicated in the course design, in the courses on 'environment and energy politics' and 'the welfare state and politics'.

The third semester consists of only one mandatory 10 credits course and the rest is optional from the two specialisations mentioned above. The complete fourth semester (30 credits) opens for courses in the specialisations. This adds up to 40 credits in the specialisation. These specialisation courses seem to be open for all students in any BA-programme at UiS, according to the online course plans. To what degree the BA-thesis also relates to the specialisation courses is not discussed in the self-assessment, nor does it become apparent in the online course design.

The MA programmes at UiS are not included in this evaluation and they are more focused and in line with the research at the department. There are two master programmes on 'risk management and societal safety and change management.' From the autumn of 2017 there is also a new master programme in 'environment, energy and society', which is more closely related to this BA-programme. This shows that there are openings for political science students who can continue their studies in Stavanger by taking a more specific and practice focused master degree.

According to the Studiebarometer, students at the bachelor level generally rank the programme lower than the national average. They find the programme less academically challenging (3.9) than the national average (4.3). They also evaluate the programmes' possibility to stimulate 'my motivation for working with my studies' lower (3.2/3.6). In spite of the discussion above based on the self-

assessment and the programme design, the students do not agree that the programme consists of courses that are well connected and integrated (3.3) if compared to the national average (4.0). This can, however, be a consequence of the difficulty of clearly presenting students how connections among and integration of courses are designed.

To conclude the programme scores very good in the programme structure and basic approaches. There is a clear introduction. The programme includes two 10+10 credit courses on methods and research design. The BA-thesis is 20 credits and is supported by a compulsory seminar. However, there is a limited number of courses (40 credits), which are optional for the students and these are not in the core of the political science track.

8.4 Teaching and assessment methods

The self-assessment provides a relatively general description of the teaching and assessment models and approaches in the programme. There are general statements on traditional teaching methods and approaches based on lectures and seminars. Also, the examination format appears rather traditional and most courses have mandatory written assignments complemented by some assessments in single courses like oral presentations and home examinations.

According to the self-assessment and the available online information on the courses the workload seems reasonable. In the self-assessment UiS also discusses the advantage of small student groups. Apparently, 10 credits are worth an average of 20 to 24 hours of lectures and 10 to 12 hours of seminars. The overall impression is that students are offered approximately five hours of teacher contact per week. Three individual supervision sessions, á one hour, are offered for the BA-thesis. There are also seminars supporting the students' work with the thesis. Students report to spend 9.9 hours a week in classes and 17.3 hours of self-organised work. Overall, they are thus somewhat below the national average in the number of weekly study hours.

Some of the specialisation courses are given as 'intensive days' (temasamlinger) of teaching instead of regular teaching every week. But even in these intensive days, traditional lectures and seminars seem to be held, just more intense. There is no explicit discussion of the pro and cons of these arrangements, apart from that this is an opening to include researchers into the courses. The course plans do not explicitly show who teaches the 'intensive days' courses (temasamlinger), because local lecturers are the contact person (emneansvarlig) for each of them. However, implicitly the information seems to give an impression of international guest lectures teaching these intensive days.

The two specialisations are based on research themes, which are focus areas at the International Research Institute of Stavanger (IRIS), a collaboration of UiS and Rogalandforskning. However, how this collaboration supports the teaching outcomes in BA-programme in political science does not become obvious. Yet, there is an active research environment for teachers to connect to and for students to benefit from. There is probably a potential for students to gain from this research centre and the master programmes that are under development .

In the Studiebarometer the students report a high degree of project work, but extremely low (0.7) on digital work methods. In the same survey the students evaluate the assessment methods which are applied throughout the BA-programme in line with the national average when it comes to reasoning, critical thinking and that the basics focus on central parts of curriculum.

8.5 Learning environment in study programmes

The learning environment for the programme is embedded into a larger setting at the UiS and the specific programme may not have its own setting as a learning environment. It is highlighted in the self-assessment report that the coordinator of the bachelor's programme arranges additional activities for the students and that s/he also supports initiatives of the student association. Such activities can be study trips, a labour market day and a role-play on the UN.

According to the Studiebarometer, the students are generally satisfied with the social environment among the students. In regard to this question the score for Stavanger studies is 4.4 compared to the national average of 3.8. The academic environment is rated lower. For example, the environment between students and staff is rated at 3.0 (national average 3.5). With respect to library services, ICT tools and study tools, the students' scores in Stavanger are close to the level of students' scores nationally.

8.6 Educational competence

A challenge addressed in the self-assessment and a focus of the department is the small group of academic staff providing the main part of the programme. At the moment there are one professor, two associate professors, one adjunct professor and one PhD candidate associated with the political science programme according (total of five people) to the self-assessment. However, according to the online course plans more teachers are involved in the programme: two professors, one professor II, one associate and one assisting professor and one lecturer as examiners. In total, there are more than eight teachers named online along with course information.

Teaching has a high status at the University of Stavanger, according to the self-assessment, which states that '...the academic staff divides time equally between teaching and research' (self-assessment, p. 7). The self-assessment also highlights the importance of teaching experiences and pedagogical competences in the recruitment process. 80 percent of the compulsory courses are given by lecturers with PhD (p. 9). There are only few teachers in the course plans who do not have a PhD. This suggests that the teaching staff is well qualified to teach and develop the programme. Moreover, it is stated in the complementary information of the UiS that only one of the four full-time teachers have not finished the pedagogical courses.

The pedagogical courses at the UiS are provided by the pedagogical learning centre, Uniped. They offer courses to staff to improve basic teaching skills and they also give guidance on teaching methods. They also highlight that UiS has a department for developing digital learning tools, NETTOP-UiS, which promotes the use of such tools for didactic development and supports teachers to take on new teaching methods. There are regular evaluations of teaching quality and programme design in the department. However, in the Studiebarometer the general result in this regard is below average. The students' evaluation of the integration of digital tools is remarkably low, in spite of the NETTOP centre at UiS.

The self-assessment mentions that the teachers in the different programmes provided by the Department of Media and Social Sciences have joint meetings where they facilitate integration between the programmes. This is good and necessary due to the high degree of integration in courses, both on methods (20 credits) and for the specialisation courses (40 credits). The self-assessment could

have discussed and elaborated advantages and disadvantages of small educational environments from a pedagogical perspective to a greater extent. The academic competences and connections to the research front seem to be provided by the researchers involved in the programme when offering limited modules/parts of the programme. Some of the teaching staff also have a connection to the research centres at UiS. However, it is not clear to what extent the staff at the research centres are involved in this BA-programme. The competences among the staff and the specialisation courses give the students a specialised education in some areas really related to the international research front in these specific fields. However, the general political science competencies among the teachers seem at a basic level.

8.7 Achieved learning

Students in the political BA programme at the University of Stavanger take an average of 40.3 credits per year which is below the national average. The students' final academic performance in this BA-programme is below the national average with the percentage of students getting the grades A or B at 24.4 percent.

The students evaluate their own achieved learning outcomes on an average, at the same level as the national numbers in the Studiebarometer. However, they rank their learning outcomes a little lower in three respects: experience with research and development work, written communication skills and abilities to work independently.

8.8 Internationalisation

There are several courses in this BA-programme which relate to international issues not least international politics, which could open for even more internationalisation and collaboration. The compulsory course in the second year on environment and energy politics is taught in English and also offered to international students. This is an important part of the internationalisation approach at UiS. Internationalisation is here used as a teaching tool to enhance each student's understanding of the international research front in line with the two specialisations. There is also international staff at the research institutes, but it is not clear how much they participate in teaching.

While the number of students going on exchange is currently rather low (app. 3.5 percent of students), the UiS aims at increasing the number of students studying abroad as well as the number of incoming exchange students. Students have the opportunity to go abroad in the fourth semester. But since the specialisation courses are optional during this semester students may stay in Stavanger in order to take these courses which are special for the BA at UiS. In the self-assessment this is discussed as a main reason for the low numbers of students going abroad.

8.9 Relevance

This BA programme has a strong grounding in its two specialisations, which are public management and risk and safety management. The students are provided with good connections to the specific research fields which are related to this programme, since they meet researchers from these international fields of research. The programme still provides the basics of all areas of political science and related general social science disciplines. Thereby the overall design of the programme meets the

identified needs in the (local) labour market and there seems to be a connection between the labour market and the programme.

However, the students assess the relevance slightly lower than the national average in most questions in the Studiebarometer. Students evaluate how the programme provides competence that is generally useful in occupational life significantly lower (3.3) compared to the national average (4.0).

According to UiS' general webpage, students have the opportunity to do internships (20 ECTS) from the academic year of 2017/2018. This is not mentioned in the self-assessment or on the programme webpage, probably because it is a new opportunity provided to students. According to the additional information from the university, eight students have signed up during this first year. There is a good film on the webpage of the UiS presenting the benefits of internships and how they are organised.

8.10 Educational leadership

This programme is still quite new. The first students were admitted in 2011 and UiS is still developing a management structure and arrangement in some respects. The close collaboration with the research institute IRIS is important for the academic qualities and the teachers' opportunities to maintain a connection to the research front. How this is managed is not clear in the self-assessment, but it can probably be enhanced by the development of the new master programmes. The collaboration with other social science disciplines is essential for the quality of the programme, in particular sociology regarding the research methods and the new opening for internship. However, the management structures of these two extensions of the programme are not described in the self-assessment report. But in such a small group of academic staff this is probably smoothly arranged.

8.11 Overall assessment of the quality of the education

The UiS offers a well-structured BA-programme in political science including two specialisations which relate to research at UiS and which is relevant for the regional labour market in the area. The courses in the programme follow a general model and there are openings for the specialisation in the second year. There are two method courses worth 10 credits each and there is a final BA-thesis worth 20 credits. The panel recommends that the following points are considered by the department:

First, while the department has managed to strengthen the political science profile through recruitment of new staff, there is still a relatively weak basis for a full-scale political science programme. It is therefore of major importance to carefully consider where collaboration with other programmes is fruitful and where recruitment of additional staff is needed. We would also recommend the UiS to further develop the integration with the research institutes and highlight the competences gained through the specialisation courses.

Second, while the programme structure generally seems well-functioning, some attention could be devoted to the extent to which comparative politics is covered in the programme. In addition, based on the Studiebarometer it is crucial to consider the relation between the different courses in the programme.

Third, the students' evaluation of the programme is in many aspects below the national average. The opportunity for BA students to meet and interact with staff members is a point of attention. Also,

students are less satisfied with the academic environment between staff and students than at other universities. While this may at least partly be related to the novelty of the programme and the small group of staff it is still a reason for concern and dialogue with student representatives.

Fourth, the use of different pedagogical and assessment methods may be considered. While the available material limits the ability to evaluate these aspects, it appears that more attention to these issues and to variation in assessment methods is warranted.

Fifth, while the recent opportunities for internships seems to be appreciated, there are still potentials to develop both the aspect of general relevance and the internationalisation of the programme both for incoming and outgoing students.

9 Political Science at the University of Tromsø - The Arctic University of Norway (UiT)

UiT - The Arctic University of Norway (University of Tromsø) was founded in 1972 as a comprehensive university for the northern region of Norway. Over the past 10 years, the university has been through several mergers with university colleges in the region, and it is now the third largest university in Norway. The Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education was founded in 2009 after a reorganisation of the university, and the departments were also reorganised at that time. Political science is located in a Department of Social Sciences, together with sociology, social anthropology and community planning.

Study programmes included in this evaluation:

- BA in Political Science
- MA in Political Science

University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway			
Study programmes included in the evaluation:		BA in Political Science	MA in Political Science
Student population	Number of enrolled students, first year (2017) ⁴⁷	84	2
	Share of female students, total (2017) ⁴⁸ .	39,9	46,7
Admission data	Number of study places per year (2017) ⁴⁹ .	60	
	Number of qualified first choice applicants (2017) ⁵⁰ .	36	
	Grade points (2017) ⁵¹	All	
Output	Completion rates at standard time (% , 2014-2016) ⁵² Per study programme: Average: 31,8	32,4	29,4
	A+B grade percentage (2017) ⁵³	30,4	33,3

47 Students who actually started their studies in 2017 after being offered a study place. Data from Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH): <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

48 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

49 Norwegian: Planlagte studieplasser. Data from The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service (NUCAS): <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

50 Data from NUCAS: <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

51 Grade points for the primary certificate quota (Norwegian: ORDF). Grade points are the average of all number grades multiplied by 10. Bonus points may be added, e.g. for science and foreign languages. See full explanation here (Norwegian only): <http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/opptak/poengberegning/index.html>. Data from NUCAS:

<http://www.samordnaopptak.no/info/om/sokertall/sokertall-2017/>.

52 Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

53 All A and B grades as a percentage of all grades given at the study programme. Data from DBH: <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>.

9.1 Organisation and resources

The UiT offers two political science programmes: one BA programme (three years) and one MA programme (two years). Both programmes are part of this evaluation. The UiT also participates in a three year PhD programme in humanities and social sciences which is not part of this evaluation. The political science programmes are situated in the Department of Social Sciences (formerly Department of Sociology, Political Science and Community Planning) at the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education. This means that the political science me is situated within a multidisciplinary environment at the faculty and department levels. The website of the department shows 72 staff members (including PhD-students, post-docs and support staff).

9.2 Initial competence

The BA programme in political science attracted 36 first applicants in 2017 while it has 60 places. The low application rate makes it a relatively unpopular program, which is most likely explained by the geographical location of the university. The self-assessment is informative in that respect, because it mentions student recruitment as a challenge given the low population number in the region. As in many countries, most universities depend very much on regional recruitment. Hence it is difficult for UiT to recruit students from other parts of Norway. The small number of potential students speaks in favour of continuing to offer multidisciplinary cooperation and programmes. However, there may be ways to increase student population in spite of the relatively isolated position of the university. For example, the self-assessment shows that the management is very aware of the linkage between regional challenges and global challenges. This could be used more than is currently the case to attract a higher number of students from other parts of Norway.

The department organises a two hour meeting in the beginning of each semester for new BA and the MA students. According to the additional information academic staff and support staff introduce themselves and provide students with relevant information in (separate) meetings. There is also ‘a full day seminar for political science students at the beginning of the semester where professors present their research’ and guest speakers are invited. Further, students are expected to participate in more general UiT start-activities. The students follow a skills course in the beginning of the BA programme in which they are taught academic writing. There seem to be more introductory activities for the BA than for the MA programme.

There is no selection in the BA programme; basic competence for studying at the university is sufficient. And because the number of students applying is well below the number of places (36/60) everyone who meets the criteria is effectively admitted. The program management values the open access of the BA programme, but also admits that ‘the real world is more complex’.

In order to be admitted to the MA programme, BA students need an average grade of C or more and have acquired at least 90 EC of political science related courses of which 30 EC at an advanced level. There are no additional demands for having ECs in methodology. The amount of political science related EC is more than is required in several other political programmes.

9.3 Programme design

The UiT offers a broad program of political science at the BA level. According to the Studiebarometeret, the students find the programme academically challenging (4.0). The programme is well integrated (4.0) and motivates students to work with their studies (3.5). It includes all sub-disciplines of political science. The programme is cumulative and starts with obligatory introductory courses and evolves towards more specialised electives. The learning outcomes of the individual courses are clearly stated and are relevant for the discipline. There seems to be reasonable progression from the BA to the MA level in the formulation of the learning outcomes.

A weak part of the BA programme is that a final thesis (20 EC) is not required, but optional for students. Although BA programmes do not necessarily have to be finished with a final thesis, a good and clearly defined alternative should be offered to students who opt for finishing the programme without the thesis. Under the current arrangement it is difficult to guarantee that students not opting for a thesis reach the same learning outcomes as students choosing to finish the programme with a thesis. From an international comparative perspective it is also problematic that there are only 10 ECs committed to training in methods. Methodology is possibly integrated in the substantive political science courses, but this is not clear from the self-assessment or website.

The MA is also a broad political science programme. Students show some dissatisfaction with the level of integration of the MA (3.5 as compared to the average of 4.0). The MA also scores below average on its ability to motivate students to study (3.4 out of an average of 3.8) and its ability to challenge students (4.0 as compared to the average of 4.4). Due attention is given to methodology in the MA (20 EC obligatory courses). In addition, there is another 5 EC obligatory course on the philosophy of science. In total, the programme includes 40 EC of mandatory courses and 30 EC of electives. The curriculum is heavily dominated by the 50 EC dedicated to the MA thesis. Since the 50 EC do not include components such as a design seminar or a counseling seminar, 50 EC is a lot by international comparison, and it is not clear why this choice was made.

9.4 Teaching and assessment methods

Overall, both the BA and MA students seem to be satisfied with the teaching and assessment methods. In the Studiebarometer Tromsø students often give higher scores than the national average. Students are satisfied in relation to covering the central parts of the curriculum, requiring understanding and reasoning and stimulating reflection and critical thinking. Students indicate that there are more lectures than seminars in the MA (4.9 as compared to 4.4 nationally), whereas one would expect more smaller scale educational approaches to be used at the MA level.

The self-assessment and additional information show that traditional ways of teaching dominate. School exams and essays are mentioned as the most common ways of assessment. Many courses offer a combination of the two forms of examination. Oral exams are also used in the BA and MA. More attention for developing innovative teaching and assessments would be welcome. The self-assessment refers to the university that apparently has various means to ensure varied and appropriate teaching and assessment methods, but it is unclear how this is taken up by the department.

There seems to be an adequate amount of time reserved for thesis supervision. At the BA-level the amount of supervision is set at five hours for the supervisor. At the MA level supervisors are granted

65 hours for supervision in total per student, which is more than sufficient. There seems to be a low number of study hours (29.4), but this is in line with the national average (29.3). The required readings include textbooks, but also advanced academic articles, especially in the later phase of the BA and in the MA.

9.5 Learning environment in study programmes

In general, the students are relatively satisfied with the learning environment. Rooms for teaching and other study work merits some attention for the BA, since students are relatively dissatisfied as compared to the national satisfaction rates (2.7 versus 3.4 in the Studiebarometer). This is apparently no problem in the MA programme.

Given the multidisciplinary nature of the department and the faculty, political science students study in an environment in which they regularly meet students from other programmes. The classes are relatively small. The accessibility of the courses, leading to a diverse student population in terms of background, prior education, grades and motivation, is described as a challenge in the self-assessment. It is not clear how the management plans to address this challenge. At the same time, the multidisciplinary nature of the department and the faculty is mainly reflected in research and not so much in teaching, as is reported in the self-assessment. Although the management recognizes ‘possibilities’ to better capitalize on multidisciplinary cooperation, it is not clear whether action has been undertaken to actually realize these possibilities. It seems that the programmes do not yet fully use the possibilities of the multidisciplinary character.

On a limited scale, the department organises extracurricular events such as ‘an academic day in political science’ and breakfast seminars. Students are not entirely satisfied with the library and library services (0.4 points below national average in the Studiebarometer).

The policy to deal with contingencies such as illness of staff members was described in the additional information. In case of short term absence classes are normally rescheduled. In the case of long-term absence another staff member steps in.

9.6 Educational competence

Recently the department decided that applicants for job positions must have a pedagogical portfolio. Applicants for job positions must show teaching abilities, including familiarity with different and new teaching methods and technologies. Further, trial lectures are used to assess the teaching competence of applicants and teaching is discussed during job interviews. The department has started thinking about ways to further enhance the educational skills of staff members. Recently, together with several other institutes a report was written that ‘offers several suggestions how to improve teaching quality and to acknowledge teaching qualifications’. Also, the university launched a pilot, called ‘system of merit’ which involves lecturers, associate professors, senior lecturers and professors. It remains unclear what this pilot intends to achieve and how many staff members will be involved.

Staff members are motivated to attend relevant courses, conferences, seminars and workshops in Norway and abroad, and funding for this is provided by the department. Funding is also available for projects related to teaching and education, but it remains unclear what these projects exactly are. The project for excellence of teaching seems promising.

In 2016, about 20 percent of teaching was carried out by instructors without a PhD. These instructors are sometimes MA students. It is unclear how the quality of teaching is assured in these cases and how this relates to the general requirement of staff members having sufficient teaching abilities. All staff is required 'to have some pedagogical training', but no information is provided on how many staff members have actually received this training and what level of training they have achieved.

Research seems to be well connected to teaching. The website shows that the department has an active research staff that teaches themes and topics related to their research.

9.7 Achieved learning

Overall, the achieved learning outcomes are often lower than the national average according to the Studiebarometer. Attention is needed regarding the ability to work independently (3.7/4.2), written communication skills (3.6/3.9), for the BA and theoretical knowledge (3.7/4.1), and knowledge of scientific work methods and research (3.4/3.9) in the MA. The fraction of students getting A/B grades is lower than the national average. While a system of external examiners serves to ensure some level of consistency across all institutions, it is still highly questionable whether differences in the share of students obtaining high grades indicate differences in achieved learning. The failure rate is above national average. The number of credits obtained per student per year is below the national average.

9.8 Internationalisation

It seems that internationalisation is mainly understood in terms of sending students abroad via exchange programmes. Students in the BA are enabled to go on exchange and are actually encouraged to do so. They can spend one or two semesters abroad. In 2017, 11 students out of 19 (57 percent) made use of the exchange opportunity. The year before the number was much lower (3 out of 25 students, 12 percent), which seems to have been an exception, because from 2013 to 2015 the percentage of students going abroad was around 30.

The program description shows that only one English course (Global Political Economy) was offered in the BA in 2016-2017. Whereas it is understandable that an undergraduate programme in a geographically isolated university has Norwegian as the primary language, international developments in higher education (increased mobility of students across borders) would plea for more English language courses or perhaps even an English language specialisation. That is even more the case for the MA. Only two courses in the MA (Comparative Political Economy and Model United Nations) are offered in English, which is not much.

The academic staff is primarily Norwegian, but most staff members publish in English. Reading lists are primarily Norwegian, but also make use of English texts from the first semester in the BA onwards.

9.9 Relevance

The BA and MA are political science programmes with a focus on generating (BA) and deepening (MA) knowledge and methodological skills in political science, but within the context of a multidisciplinary department and faculty. As such, the programmes are orientated towards an even

broader range of professions than is already the case for political science programmes in general. On top of that, an emphasis is put on the development of ‘responsible citizens’. As part of this process students ‘learn to argue’ and ‘balance different’ arguments while discussing ‘a variety of questions related to democracy at both the local and the national levels’.

Although these skills are relevant to the labour market, it is not clear from the curriculum or the self-assessment in which courses these skills are taught. There is a reference to the seminar structure as a ‘student active arena’, but it is unclear how the teaching and assessment forms exactly contribute to the transmission of the skills mentioned above. Further, there does not seem to be a connection with institutions from the labour market.

The Studiebarometer shows that students are relatively satisfied with the relevance of the BA programme. The scores regarding the relevance to ‘natural’ occupational fields (3.9/3.8) and on competence which is generally useful in occupational life (4.1/4.0) are above national average. In the MA (which is the more relevant level of education when it comes to labour market preparation) attention is needed regarding competence which is generally useful in occupational life, scoring 3.8 versus the national average of 4.1). Also, cooperation with workplaces in the labour market scores relatively low. The MA scores 2.4 in this regard (2.9 nationally) and the department does not yet seem to have developed plans to improve this connection.

9.10 Educational leadership

The BA and MA programmes are led by a programme staff consisting of staff members, students and an administrative secretary. Academic leadership is involved in the development of the BA and MA programmes at all levels. On the course level there is one responsible staff member and on the level of the study-programmes program coordinators are appointed who are also members of the programme board. The programme board advises the department board, and sometimes the faculty board, on teaching related topics. The department board makes decisions on the study programme and takes educational resources into account. This includes qualified teachers, but also the practice of letting senior professors teach at all levels. In general, this seems to be an adequate set up for educational leadership

9.11 Overall assessment of the quality of the education

Overall, the UiT offers two adequate political science programmes. It offers an attractive BA and MA political science programme in a multidisciplinary environment. Given the geographically isolated position of the university the programmes perform well. The department offers adequate training to political science students. This is also reflected in the Studiebarometer, where students show that they are satisfied with the programmes. The staff is qualified and connects research to teaching.

There are several challenges that may be addressed in order to improve the programmes. First, the initial competence is a weak point. The number of incoming students is low as compared to the available places and the department could do a better job in attracting more students. For example, this could be achieved by giving the themes mentioned in the self-assessment (close relationship with Russia and climate change) a more prominent place in the curriculum. Also, the department could improve ‘marketing’ its’ relatively small size (more individual attention) and multidisciplinary.

Secondly, it would be recommendable to include more introductory activities in the BA and MA. This would likely lead to a more effective learning experience for the students, and also create a student community. The latter is important given the small size of the programme and the isolated position of the university.

Third, although dropout in the BA or MA does not seem to be a large problem, the programme management could consider ways to promote the best possible match between prospective students and the programme. One way to do so is to not only provide students with information about the programme, but also to collect information on the skills and knowledge of the students.

Fourth, although the programme design is adequate in general, the policy to let BA students choose between a final thesis and an alternative assignment could be rethought. A good and clearly defined alternative should be offered to students who opt for finishing the programme without the thesis. Under the current arrangement, it is difficult to guarantee that students not opting for a thesis, reach the same learning outcomes as students choosing a thesis. Also, more credits for methodology courses would be commendable.

Fifth, the department could pay more attention to innovative teaching and assessment methods. This would link to international developments in higher education and could contribute making the programme more attractive for students.

Sixth, in terms of internationalisation it is promising that students make good use of the foreign exchange option. However, more courses in English would be recommendable. It would connect well to international developments in higher education (increased mobility of students across borders) and it could also help attracting more students to the programmes in Tromsø.

Finally, the department could pay more attention to the preparation for the labour market. Regarding the MA programme, it would be advisable to pay particular attention to competences that are generally useful in occupational life. Also, it is recommendable to build connections with institutions from the labour market.

10 Conclusion

10.1 Overall assessment of the disciplinary area

10.1.1 General comments

The evaluation of political science education in Norway encompasses programmes at seven different universities. While all of the included programmes are broadly conceived within the discipline of political science, there is wide variation in the titles and content of the programmes. Overall, a main distinction can be made between programmes which use the political science label and include introductions to all or most major sub-disciplines within the field of political science and programmes which have a more narrow focus, mainly related to public administration (and in the case of the University of Bergen also a programme specialising on comparative politics). In addition, the programme at the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences to a large degree focuses on the practical use of public management skills, while the other programmes are more research oriented.

Correspondence between the program title, the learning objectives and the course content is provided in most of the programmes. It is therefore not necessarily problematic that the programme titles vary. It is, however, worthwhile to consider whether coordination between the institutions could benefit potential students who may find it difficult to distinguish between MA's in 'administration and organisation theory', 'political science and management' and 'public management'. Apart from the main distinction between general political science programmes and programmes focusing on public administration, the panel has the impression that the diversity in the labelling of the programmes reflects path-dependence rather than major substantial differences programmes.

In addition, it is not clear to the panel to what extent the programmes are targeting the same or different labour markets. From the examples available at the webpages of the universities, it appears that the typical jobs, which candidates from different programmes obtain, are largely similar. However, a more systematic analysis of the patterns of employment would be useful regarding the institutions' development of their programmes and for prospective students.

10.1.2 The strategic situation of the programmes

The included programmes vary in size with some programmes accept about 40 new BA students each year and others more than 150 new students. There is a clear geographical pattern in the number of first choice applicants, where the universities located in the Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim area are able to attract a much larger number of applicants than those located in Agder, Stavanger and Tromsø. It is particularly noticeable that the University of Tromsø has fewer applicants than the number of study places available. Among the other universities, the University of Bergen has the lowest number of applicants per study place, which is largely a result of the high number of study places offered in the programmes at Bergen.

This situation reflects how the universities are in very different strategic situations. For the universities located in the larger cities it is not only easier to attract students, but also easier to attract highly qualified international staff members. These universities are therefore able to provide very good

programmes which are on par with good international political science programmes in terms of the faculty teaching and the curriculum. The strategic challenge is to maintain the quality of education by paying continuous attention to faculty recruitment, programme development and advancement in teaching and assessment methods.

For universities with a less favourable geographical location, a main strategic challenge is the recruitment of qualified staff and students. The panel recognizes that several of the institutions are aware of these challenges and have taken crucial steps to meet them. Among these are specialisation in areas where it is possible to build up a critical mass of staff and cooperation with other disciplines. The panel recommends paying even more systematic attention to this challenge and discussion among institutions in similar strategic situations.

A common challenge for the programmes seems to be relatively high dropout rates (above 40 percent). Also, at most universities the students take only 40 credits per year, which is substantially lower than the 60 credits constituting a full year of work.

10.1.3 The design of BA and MA programmes

The structure of the BA and MA programmes are relatively similar across the different universities. The typical BA programme consists of a number of mandatory courses within the field of the programme and a number of elective courses. The BA programmes typically include some methods training, but from an international perspective there is relatively little focus on research methods at this level. It is also noticeable that the number of ECTS allocated to the BA thesis is only 10 at some programmes.

In contrast, the MA programmes are generally very research oriented. Most programmes have several mandatory courses on research design and methods, and the MA thesis is a very prominent part of the MA programmes with up to an entire year assigned to activities related to the MA thesis. The number of substantive courses at the MA level is typically rather low, which reflects the emphasis on design and methods. From an international perspective, the contrast between a BA with little emphasis on research design and methods and a MA programme where research design and methods represent the central focus, must be seen as a crucial point of attention. First, students obtaining a BA degree will have received limited methods training. This limits their ability to independently assess the academic literature and to finish with a BA thesis by utilizing research methods at a sophisticated level.

Second, the research intensive MA programmes may prepare students better for pursuing a research career than for the labour market in the private and public sector outside of academia. While the panel believes that the skills obtained through methods training and in regard to writing a MA thesis are also transferable to the labour market, a MA with a more balanced focus on research competencies and substantive insights appears more targeted on the general labour market. Third, the BA structure may serve as a barrier to international mobility. For example, a minimum of 15-20 ECTS of methods training is required in order to obtain admission to a MA programme in political science at Danish universities.

10.1.4 Teaching and assessment methods

With respect to teaching methods, the impression of the panel is that the teaching and assessment methods used in political science programmes are fairly traditional. Here, it is particularly crucial to note that the material available for the evaluation does not allow for a very thorough assessment. Nevertheless, according to the Studiebarometer and the information provided in self-assessments the emphasis of most programmes is apparently on lectures and seminars. There is little evidence of the use of new pedagogical methods including the use of digital instruments. Also, in many programmes traditional school exams are used in a high proportion of courses. Overall, there seems to be a potential for innovation in teaching and assessment including the use of digital learning instruments.

11 Recommendations

11.1 *The institutions*

The panel recommends that the institutions engage in a dialogue about the different programmes within the discipline of political science and the extent to which different programme titles reflect substantially different programmes or path-dependence.

The panel recommends that the institutions consider options for collaboration between universities. Some of the programmes in political science are relatively small with a limited number of staff and students. These programmes may benefit greatly from closer collaboration with the institutions where the discipline of political science is more consolidated.

The panel recommends that the institutions consider the composition between BA and MA programmes when it comes to the balance between substantive courses and courses focusing on research design and methods. From an international perspective, the ECTS devoted to research design and methods at the BA level is relatively low, while many of the MA programmes focus heavily on research training.

The panel recommends that the institutions consider the options for further development and innovation in teaching and assessment methods.

11.2 *The Ministry of Education and Research*

The panel recommends that the ministry considers the different types of programmes within the discipline of political science and whether the current situation provides reasonable transparency for prospective students and employers.

The panel recommends that the ministry considers the possibilities for systematic collection of educational data across institutions and programmes. Systematic collection of data about for example dropout rates, the number of ingoing and outgoing exchange students and employment patterns for graduates would provide important information to stakeholders and benefit future evaluations.

11.3 NOKUT

The panel recommends that NOKUT closely considers the material made available for future evaluations. A crucial limitation of the evaluation is the lack of more systematic information relevant for many of the evaluation dimensions.

The panel recommends that NOKUT considers the type of questions that institutions are asked to respond to in self-assessments. In general, the panel recommends distinguishing between very specific questions asking institutions for precise information e.g. about the percentage of staff with pedagogical training and open questions asking institutions to reflect on the educational dimensions.

The panel recommends that institutions are asked to provide a fact sheet including an overview of the programme structure including the number of class hours, assigned faculty and reading lists for selected courses.

The panel recommends that NOKUT reconsiders the use of pedagogical experts. To strengthen their input to the evaluation it is recommendable to provide experts with material that allows them to assess the pedagogical quality of faculty and/or courses in a more comprehensive manner.

12 Reflections on the evaluation

The evaluation is based on material made available to the panel by NOKUT as well as inspection of programme webpages describing the program structure, individual courses etc. It has been a recurrent discussion in the panel to what extent this material allowed for evaluating the dimensions the panel was asked to evaluate. In general, the panel believes that it was possible to get an impression of the programmes and provide recommendations for most dimensions, but the material did not allow for a thorough and encompassing evaluation of the programmes.

A central part of the material consisted of self-assessments from the included institutions and responses to a set of follow-up questions from the panel. In the self-assessments, institutions were asked relatively broad questions related to the different dimensions of the evaluations. In general, the responses provided were useful, but there were large discrepancies in the information provided by the different institutions. Some institutions provided very specific information, while others responded in broad terms. The panel believes that this limited the extent to which self-assessment could be used in a systematic way. For example, when a specific activity or focus point was mentioned in one self-assessment and not in others, this could not be interpreted to mean that the same activity or focus point was not present at all institutions.

The panel appreciated the opportunity to ask additional questions to the institutions. The responses provided useful input to the report. Still, while some institutions provided very clear and concise answers, others responded in more vague terms, possibly reflecting that answers were not readily available. The pedagogical reports largely confirmed the panels own evaluation of the programme. While this increases the reliability of conclusions, it would be more valuable to ask pedagogical experts for more thorough evaluations, for example evaluations of a number of selected courses.

Moreover, the panel had access to results from the Studiebarometer. Here, students were asked about a number of issues related to their study environment and programmes. This is a useful tool for broad comparisons of institutions, but the panel believes that the responses need careful interpretation. First, the response rate and absolute number of students responding were in some cases very limited. Second, student responses may to some extent reflect how institutions frame their activities rather than substantial differences in programmes. Therefore, the panel generally believes that the data from the Studiebarometer are primarily useful when combined with information from other sources.

The webpages of the departments were an important source for information about the programmes, courses and faculty. It was generally straightforward to get overall information about statements concerning learning outcomes, the structure of the programmes and the content of individual courses. More variation was found regarding information about the organisation of courses with respect to the number of class hours and provision of reading lists. When available, the panel has used this information, but because this was not systematically available on all webpages it was not possible to compare this aspect systematically across institutions.

The overall impression of the panel is that relatively little systematic data collection about study programmes is undertaken at an overall level. This seems to be the case both when it comes to information about students such as dropout rates and the number of exchange students and regarding levels and patterns of employment. Some universities have provided this kind of information, but this does not allow for systematic comparison across institutions because of possible differences in the way numbers are calculated.

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