

Approval of the application
by Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
(NOKUT)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

Register Committee
30 June 2023

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Ver. 1.0
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Application of:	2022-03-22		
Agency registered since:	2013-05-01		
Type of review:	Targeted	Site visit:	2022-12-07
External review report of:	2023-04-19	Submitted:	2023-05-12
Review coordinated by:	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)		
Review panel members:	Karin Järplid Linde, Pegi Pavletic, Simona Lache		
Decision of:	2023-06-30		
Registration until:	2028-04-30		
Absented themselves from decision-making:	/		
Attachments:	1. External Review Report (separate file), 2023-04-19		

1. The application of 2022-03-22 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 2022-05-16.
3. The Register Committee considered the targeted external review report of 2023-04-19 on the compliance of NOKUT with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).

Analysis:

4. In considering NOKUT's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account the following activities: *institutional accreditation, study programme accreditation, periodic review of institutional quality assurance practices, supervision of the institutional accreditation, supervision of the programme accreditation and evaluations of quality of education.*
5. The activities *accreditation of tertiary vocational study programmes, accreditation of tertiary vocational subject areas, periodic review of tertiary vocational institutional quality assurance practices, supervision of tertiary*

vocational study programmes and subject areas, recognition of foreign education, regulatory and economic tasks, implementation of the National Student Survey, implementation of the National Teacher Survey and national assessment examinations are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the application inclusion on the Register.

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6. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on NOKUT's level of compliance with the ESG.

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7. With regard to the specific European Standards, the Register Committee considered the following:

ESG 2.1 – Consideration of internal quality assurance

1. In its initial registration decision of 2014-05-22 as well as in its renewal of registration of 2018-12-05, the Committee raised the insufficient coverage of three particular standards of the ESG Part 1 (ESG 1.3, ESG 1.4 and ESG 1.5) in the agency's programme periodic reviews.

2. In the review report (of 2023-04-19) the panel explained that the evaluation criteria for the three standards are to some extent covered through regulations issued by the higher education institutions and the ministry. NOKUT's criteria, however, have not changed since the agency's last renewal of registration.

3. **While the Committee learned that looking at systemic level, the different regulations touch upon the three particular standards, it found that the full coverage of all the standards of Part 1 is still not ensured through agency's own criteria. Partial coverage of aspects through national legislation does not substitute coverage through external QA procedures and coverage of the ESG part 1 by higher education institutions' internal QA is a prerequisite for EQA being able to assess their implementation. Following this, the Committee upheld its earlier judgement of partial compliance.**

ESG 2.4 – Peer-review experts

4. When NOKUT was admitted to the Register it was found to be partially compliant with the standard as it didn't include students as panel members in the procedure for initial programme accreditation. In its renewal decision, the Register Committee noted that while there was no systematic inclusion of students in all expert groups for initial accreditation, that their inclusion was being piloted.

5. The Committee has learned that now the agency involves students in all of the ESG aligned activities, including the initial programme accreditation reviews. **Following this, the Committee found that the agency now complies with the standard 2.4. It, however, highlighted the panel's recommendation that NOKUT could offer better support to student panel members regarding writing of the external review reports and strengthen their confidence as experts.**

ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals

6. In its last decision the Committee found the agency to be partially compliant with the standard due to the lack of formal complaints' procedure. – the higher education institutions could express their dissatisfaction with the process only informally throughout the review process.

7. Since the last review, the agency developed a post review survey aimed at all HEIs undergoing a review with NOKUT and a possibility to schedule a meeting with the agency and discuss the issues, available in their guidelines. The panel noted, however, that these provisions are not easy to find in agency's documentation and are not well known by the higher education institutions.

8. The Committee found that there have been no major changes since the last renewal of the registration – the agency is yet to establish a clear complaints procedure that is known by higher education institutions. The Register Committee found the agency still partially compliant with ESG 2.7.

For the remaining standards, the Register Committee was able to concur with the review panel's analysis and conclusion without further comments.

Conclusion:

9. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that NOKUT demonstrated compliance with the ESG (Parts 2 and 3) as follows:

Standard	Previous decision (2018-12-06)	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Partial compliance	Compliance	Partial compliance
2.2	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.3	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.4	Partial compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.5	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.6	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.7	Partial compliance	Compliance	Partial compliance
3.1	Compliance	Full compliance	Compliance
3.2	Compliance	Full compliance	Compliance
3.3	Compliance	Full compliance	Compliance
3.4	Compliance	Substantial compliance	Compliance
3.5	Compliance	Full compliance	Compliance

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3.6	Compliance	Full compliance	Compliance
3.7	Compliance	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

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10. The Register Committee considered that NOKUT only achieved partial compliance with some standards. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee concluded that these are specific and limited issues, but that NOKUT continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.

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11. The Register Committee therefore renewed NOKUT's inclusion on the Register. NOKUT's renewed inclusion) shall be valid until 2028-04-30¹.

12. The Register Committee further underlined that NOKUT is expected to address the issues mentioned appropriately and to resolve them at the earliest opportunity.

¹ Inclusion is valid for five years from the date of the external review report, see §4.1 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.