



# THE YEAR

2018



Terje Mørland  
director general

## DEAR READER

2018 was a hectic and exciting year for NOKUT. Hectic because we have high ambitions for our operations and the further development of our services. Exciting because at the end of the year we were still waiting for important political decisions to be taken regarding NOKUT's future role and tasks.

After many years of reorganising the state administration of education, the final pieces fell into place during the course of the year. The Universities and University Colleges Act was amended to make it easier for NOKUT to carry out both independent tasks and ordinary administration tasks for the Ministry of Education and Research. Transfer of tasks from the ministry started on 1 September. This meant we were able to welcome 12 new members of staff in the Financial Inspection Section. More new tasks will be assigned in 2019 and subsequent years.

Following the reorganisation, NOKUT has gained more legal expertise. Otherwise, we will largely continue as before. Our remit, which requires us to both ensure and encourage the development of quality in higher education and tertiary vocational education, has been continued. We will, as before, keep society informed about the quality status. The work on recognising and providing information about foreign education will also continue. And, not

least, we will continue to be a visible ambassador for educational quality and help ensure that society can have confidence in both the education offered in Norway and recognised foreign education.

NOKUT's work on Norwegian education will henceforth be split into two groups of instruments: 1) regulatory administration and quality assurance, and 2) documentation, analysis and communication of the quality status. What we had in terms of financial incentives has been transferred to the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku). Our various activities provide us with a broad knowledge base regarding the quality situation in the sector. We make this knowledge available for educational institutions' and the government's work on improving and developing the quality of education. We also create arenas for debate and dialogue. In 2018, we particularly focused on getting better at showcasing academic environments that boast good quality work. Sharing good practice was the theme of several seminars, NOKUT breakfast seminars and episodes of NOKUT's podcast.

Our services associated with recognising foreign education can also be divided into two main groups: 1) operation of various recognition schemes, and

2) informational and advisory tasks. In the last three years, the portfolio has been expanded with the introduction of several new recognition schemes and other services. From 2019, we will have recognition schemes for higher education, tertiary vocational education (higher vocational education) and vocational education and training (upper secondary school). In addition to this there are various information services for applicants, employers, educational institutions and the integration support system.

In recent years, we have digitalised services and communication with applicants educated abroad. We will continue this work. In addition to providing better and more efficient application processing here and now, we will facilitate the automation of all or parts of the recognition processes in coming years.

NOKUT will continue to work hard every day so that students and employers can have confidence in the quality of Norwegian education and recognised foreign education. On the following pages you can read more about some of our tasks and highlights in 2018.

Enjoy the magazine!

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# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

– January, February, March



## THE TEACHER SURVEY

A majority of the teachers in Norwegian higher education are satisfied with the quality of the study programmes they teach. At the same time, the teachers think that too many students have poor prior knowledge and that the standards vary too much from one Norwegian student to the next. This is shown by NOKUT's Teacher Survey. The goal of the Teacher Survey is to produce a broad, representative picture of the academic staff's assessments of the quality of Norwegian higher education.

NOKUT believes that the results will be useful for academic environments, institutions and authorities in their work on developing educational quality. The Teacher Survey was sent out to 25,604 people. The response rate was 42 per cent.

A new survey is planned for 2020.

## STUDIEBAROMETERET FOR UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Students at Norwegian universities and university colleges were very satisfied with the quality of their study programmes. This was shown by the 2018 Studiebarometeret. This is a student survey that is sent out to all second- and fifth-year students.

Eight out of ten students thought that the study programme they were taking was vocationally relevant or by and large vocationally relevant. Two of the things that students were least satisfied with were feedback and guidance. Only around half of the students were satisfied with the academic staff's ability to provide constructive feedback on their work and the academic supervision they received. The results show that digital tools are not used very much in the teaching provided. At the same time, the students were satisfied with the digital tools when they were actually used.

Studiebarometeret is an annual national survey that asks students how satisfied they are with their study programme. 65,000 students received the questionnaire. The 2018 Studiebarometeret was the fifth annual survey. The response rate was 48 per cent.

## POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM UNESCO

NOKUT met with UNESCO to brief them on our work on recognising foreign vocational education and training and to map out areas for future international cooperation on the recognition of such qualifications. No scheme for international cooperation equivalent to the Lisbon Recognition Convention is currently in place for this area. This also means that NOKUT does not have a network of recognition offices for cooperation on recognition questions.

UNESCO was very positive about NOKUT's work and positive about future cooperation in this area. The Shanghai Consensus of 2012 provides a basis for UNESCO's work on international recognition of vocational education. As follow-up to the visit to UNESCO, a joint basis for further cooperation in the field was drawn up.

## NOKUT BREAKFAST SEMINARS ON TOUR

Feedback and supervision provide students with better learning. However, it is precisely these areas the students were least satisfied with in Studiebarometeret.

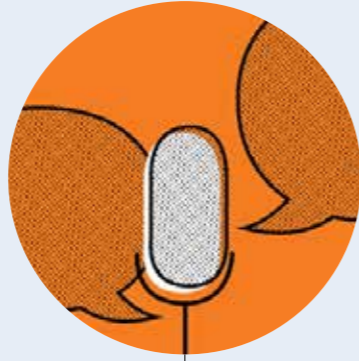
However, some study programmes stand out. They did particularly well in Studiebarometeret. What have they done right, and what can we learn from them?

In 2018, NOKUT breakfast seminars went on tour to listen to how universities are working on student feedback and supervision. We visited the University of Stavanger and UiT The Arctic University of Norway.

The topics and knowledge we put on the agenda at the NOKUT breakfast seminars generate debate. The institutions, NOKUT and other authorities, and to some extent employers and organisations, use the knowledge in their work. We thus help to ensure that educational quality is a higher priority in society, at the same time helping generate knowledge-based change. We held seven breakfast seminars in 2018.

# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

– January, February, March



## MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT BETWEEN CHINA AND NORWAY

For Norway's part, China is a high-priority partner for international educational cooperation. NOKUT was present when Norway and China signed an agreement on the mutual recognition of qualifications within higher education. The goal is to achieve more academically relevant exchange agreements between Norwegian and Chinese universities and university colleges. The signing ceremony took place during Minister of Research and Higher Education Iselin Nybø's delegation trip to China.

## YES TO UNIVERSITY STATUS FOR THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF SOUTH-EASTERN NORWAY

The University College of South-Eastern Norway (USN) fulfilled all of the requirements to become a university, and NOKUT therefore followed the recommendations of the expert committee that assessed the application. The King in Council made the final decision. Norway thus gained another university.

## STUDENT PARTNERS IN THE NOKUT PODCAST

What does it mean when students can be partners in their own education? We dived deeper into this learning philosophy together with Helen Bråten, project manager for Centres for Excellence in Education in NOKUT. The NOKUT podcast also visited Associate Professor Kristin Kjølberg. She has come up with a feedback method for her teaching that erases the traditional understanding of student and teacher. We learned more about this process when we interviewed her.

Eight episodes of the NOKUT podcast have been released since its inception in autumn 2017. The topics are linked to the work of teachers at universities or university colleges. We want the NOKUT podcast to contribute to conversations about good practice in higher education and to spread good ideas and inspiration to others in the same position.

# QUALITY IN NORWEGIAN EDUCATION

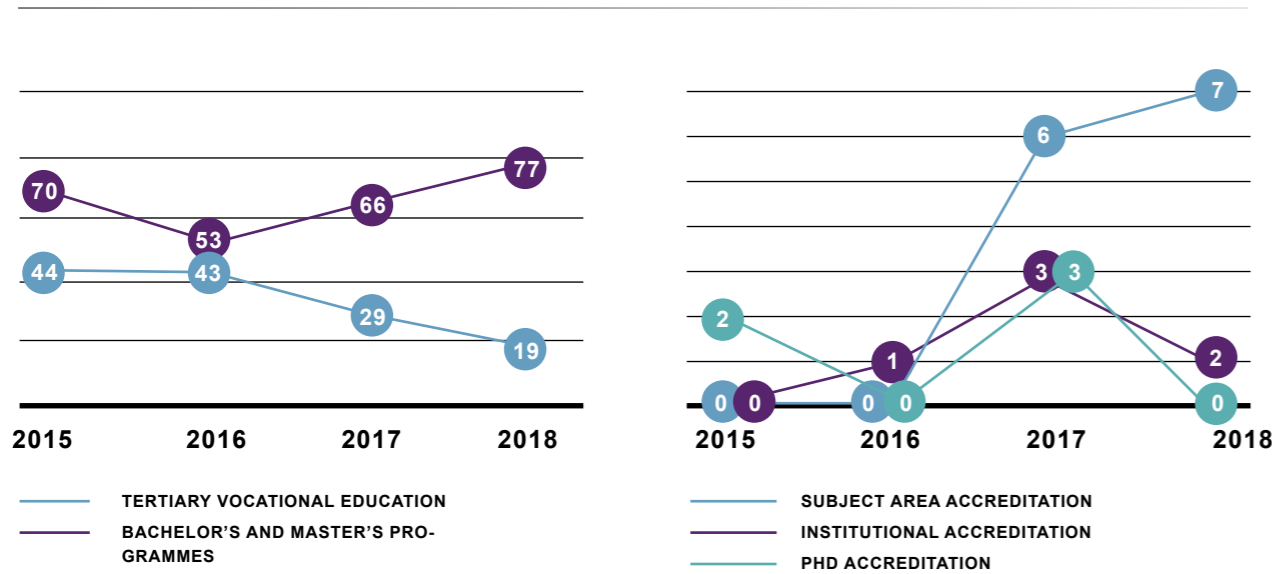
NOKUT helps to ensure that all study programmes at Norwegian universities, university colleges and tertiary vocational schools are of a satisfactory quality, that as many as possible are of an outstanding quality and that society is well-informed about the status of the sector.



### WE DO THIS BY:

- › *administering regulations and accrediting and quality-assuring institutions and study programmes*
- › *producing, collating and disseminating knowledge about the quality status*
- › *putting important topics on the agenda and providing academic policy advice*

**DEVELOPMENT IN THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION 2015–2018:**



**STUDY PROGRAMMES AUDITED IN 2019:**

Tertiary vocational programme in welding engineering, web-based with seminars	Fagskolen i Troms (tertiary vocational school)
Experience-based Master's programme in property development	Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)
PhD in the study of professional praxis	Nord University
Tertiary vocational programmes in construction (web-based) and mechanical engineering (location-based)	Fagskolen Telemark (tertiary vocational school)

— RECOGNITION UPHELD  
— RECOGNITION WITHDRAWN  
— INITIATED AUTUMN 2018

↑ Audits are NOKUT's most far-reaching instrument. We normally conduct an initial inspection before we commence an audit.

**ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

NOKUT has two roles in relation to tertiary vocational schools, university colleges and universities: We supervise through regulatory administration and quality assurance, and we contribute to the development of educational quality. Both of these main roles involve communication and academic policy advice as strategic instruments. However, supervision also plays a developmental role. We strive to orient advice, quality assurance and sharing of experiences such that we contribute to a high degree of awareness regarding the regulatory requirements and good, effective quality work at the institutions.

**NOKUT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- [accrediting and supervision of institutions and study programmes on the basis of national requirements](#)
- [quality-assuring the systematic quality work at universities and university colleges](#)

**ACADEMIC AUTHORISATIONS:**

Not all institutions can accredit new study programmes themselves.

**Universities:** All universities have this authorisation for all levels.

**University colleges:** Accredited university colleges have been authorised to start educational programmes at Bachelor's level as well as at Master's level in academic areas in which they already have accredited PhD programmes. The remaining university colleges must have accreditation from NOKUT prior to starting new study programmes.

**Tertiary vocational schools:** Most tertiary vocational schools need to apply to NOKUT to have new study programmes accredited. Subject-area accreditation allows tertiary vocational schools to establish their own study programmes within that subject area without applying to NOKUT first.

**ACCREDITATION**

In 2018, we received 19 applications for accreditation of new Bachelor's and Master's programmes. The number has more than halved since 2016. This is mainly due to all the mergers between universities and university colleges. Several are now authorised to establish study programmes without applying to NOKUT. In the same period, the number of applications for the accreditation of tertiary vocational programmes increased by 45 per cent. We received a total of 77 applications for accreditation of new tertiary vocational programmes in 2018.

We accredited 14 new study programmes at university colleges in Norway in 2018: four Bachelor's programmes, a one-year Bachelor's-level programme and eight Master's programmes. In addition, 35 tertiary vocational educational programmes were accredited. We also accredited a PhD programme at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE**

In 2018, NOKUT quality-assured around 180 study programmes at Norwegian tertiary vocational schools, university colleges and universities. This quality assurance included an initial inspection of a few selected requirements for individual study programmes, major quality-assurance projects and auditing of the accreditation of study programmes.

**QUALITY-ASSURANCE PROJECTS**

In 2018, NOKUT completed the quality assurance of Bachelor's programmes in child welfare, social work and social education (the 'BSV' study programmes) and quality-assured the cooperation between universities and university colleges and external partners. We also completed the first phase of the quality assurance of 11 Bachelor's programmes in construction engineering at a total of eight university colleges and universities.

**EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS**

NOKUT conducts various types of evaluation, assessment and analysis. The aim is to contribute to increased knowledge about issues in higher education and tertiary vocational education that are of significance for the quality of the study programmes.

**NOKUT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- [Studiebarometeret for university and university-college students](#)
- [Studiebarometeret for students in tertiary vocational education](#)
- [The Teacher Survey](#)
- [National module examinations](#)
- [The NOKUT Portal](#)
- [International Advisory Panel for Teacher Education](#)
- [Evaluating educational quality](#)

**INFORMATION**

NOKUT aims to keep society well-informed about the status of the sector. NOKUT's quality-assurance work, analyses and assessments, articles in professional journals and summaries are important contributions to the work of shedding light on the quality work and educational quality at Norwegian educational institutions.

**WE DO THIS BY MEANS OF:**

- [Reports](#)
- [The NOKUT podcast](#)
- [NOKUT breakfast seminars](#)
- [Professional seminars and conferences](#)

# USEFUL KNOWLEDGE FROM STUDIEBAROMETERET FOR STUDENTS TERTIARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Tertiary vocational school students have told us what they think about the quality of their education for the first time. This provides the authorities, tertiary vocational schools and NOKUT with a unique opportunity to gain an insight into the educational quality and, in the long term, to monitor developments.

“The students’ voices are an important contribution to improving the quality of tertiary vocational education. The feedback provides us with new knowledge that reveals differences between different study programmes and subject areas,” says Ole-Jacob Skodvin, director of analysis. He is responsible for conducting Studiebarometeret.

The results from Studiebarometeret for tertiary vocational school students are very similar to those from students at universities and university colleges.

Although the students were generally satisfied with their study programme, Studiebarometeret identified some variations in satisfaction between subjects.

The largest was between the health and social subjects, where most students were satisfied, and the technical subjects, where they were less satisfied.

Health and social subjects and technical subjects together account for 69 per cent of all tertiary vocational school students in Norway, and it will therefore be interesting to examine possible reasons behind the differences. Analysis of the responses shows that some of the differences can be explained by differences in the students’ backgrounds and how the study programmes are provided.

However, even when differences in background have been taken into account, there remains a difference in satisfaction

between the students in these two fields.

The survey also showed variations between different tertiary vocational schools within the same subject area.

“The tertiary vocational schools must take this feedback seriously and take a closer look at and compare how students experience the quality of their study programmes,” Skodvin concludes.

The results of the survey have been published at [studiebarometeret.no/fagskole](http://studiebarometeret.no/fagskole). This is a portal where students and educational institutions can look at and compare the quality of various study programmes as perceived by their students.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL SUBJECTS

- Nearly all women (90%)
- Age (average): 39
- Nearly all (90%) have relevant work experience
- Nearly all (90%) are taking study programmes worth 60 credits
- All (100%) are part-time students
- Most (64%) are studying on campus, although a relatively large proportion (23%) are studying exclusively online
- 30% want to undertake a further course of education



## TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

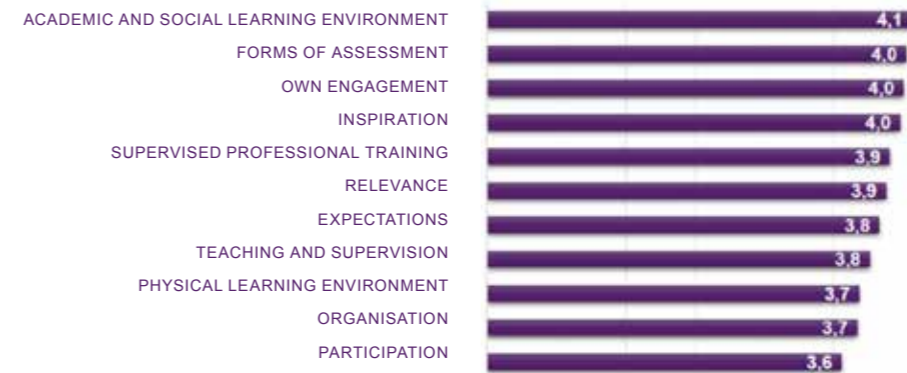
- Nearly all men (94%)
- Age (average): 29
- Nearly all (90%) have relevant work experience
- Nearly all (92%) are doing study programmes worth 120 credits
- Almost half (43%) are doing full-time study programmes
- Most (56%) are studying on campus, while almost none (4%) are studying exclusively online
- 28% want to undertake a further course of education



Ole-Jacob Skodvin  
director of analysis

“I hope the new Studiebarometeret will become an important source of knowledge for everyone working on educational quality in the tertiary vocational school sector.”

## WHAT ARE STUDENTS MOST AND LEAST SATISFIED WITH?



The figures show average values for all students on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the least positive and 5 is the most positive. The categories are composed of responses to multiple questions that deal with the category theme.

## THE DATA WILL BE USED TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

An evaluation shows that NOKUTs contacts at the tertiary vocational schools were generally satisfied with the various phases of the survey’s implementation. We received some comments about the relevance of some questions, which we are following up. Nearly all responded that they use, or will use, the results from the survey in their quality work at the tertiary vocational school.



**FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY**  
More than 5,500 students on 500 courses at 77 tertiary vocational schools responded to the survey.

Most stated that they were satisfied with their study programme. If we look at the categories they were asked about, the students were most satisfied with the academic and social learning environment, forms of assessment, own engagement and inspiration. Ranked lowest were participation, organisation and physical learning environment.

# ENSURE, DEVELOP AND INFORM ABOUT QUALITY

We are constantly striving to modernise and streamline our quality-assurance activities.

## NOKUT COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING IN 2018:

- developed further methods for more knowledge-based quality assurance
- completed the pilot testing of the new quality-assurance model for systematic quality work at universities and university colleges
- developed a new process for NOKUT's accreditation process for study programmes that in 2020
- prepared and initiate a pilot for quality-assuring tertiary vocational schools' systematic quality work

## "GET STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THE QUALITY WORK."



"The tertiary vocational schools must constantly focus on ensuring that students are participating in the development of their study programmes and that students are represented on all bodies that make decisions on their behalf. They must make it as easy as possible for the students to influence their daily lives."

By this, Simen Killingen Magnussen of the National Union of Students in Higher Vocational Education and Training in Norway (ONF) means everything from a physical place where the students can hold their meetings and a separate account for social initiatives to time off from their education to carry out student-union work.

He is an enthusiastic proponent of tertiary vocational school students having the opportunity to influence their everyday lives, and is quite clear: "It's not all a bed of roses. There is always room for improvement. Tertiary vocational schools have to work on gaining the confidence of students such that the useful information students possess about quality can be used," Magnussen continues.

## PILOT: TERTIARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

In 2018, NOKUT started a pilot for quality-assuring tertiary vocational schools' systematic quality work. The pilot covers five tertiary vocational schools: AOF Østfold, Fagskolen Aldring og helse, Fredrikstad FagAkademi AS, Norsk Hestenter og Treider Fagskoler AS.

All tertiary vocational schools have had their quality-assurance systems approved either through accreditation or through targeted processes. However, there has been no systematic follow-up over time as there has been for higher education. The Tertiary Vocational Education Act states that tertiary vocational schools must have satisfactory internal systems for quality assurance.

"NOKUT believes that periodically quality-assuring the quality work of the tertiary vocational schools will help to enhance the quality of the study programmes and focus on the institutions' responsibility for the quality of their study programmes," says Hege Brodahl, head of quality assurance.

"With this pilot we hope to try out a method for such quality assurance and highlight good examples that other tertiary vocational schools can be inspired by when it comes to the development of their quality work."

*"Over time, we want NOKUT's work to focus more on quality assurance, advice and sharing experiences in the sector, rather than accrediting study programmes."*



Øystein Lund  
director of quality assurance

## PILOT: UNIVERSITIES AND SPECIALIZED UNIVERSITIES

In connection with the amendment of the Academic Supervision Regulation, NOKUT updated the quality-assurance methods for the institutional quality assurance audit at universities and specialized universities. To see how the new quality assurance worked, NOKUT invited seven specialized universities to take part in a pilot project.

"These specialized universities have helped us learn useful information about the challenges faced in quality work and improve NOKUT's quality assurance. They have also done the rest of the sector a big favour. By taking the lead, others can learn. I hope that everyone will work together and share their experiences of quality work," says Hege Brodahl, head of quality assurance.

One important change to the Academic Supervision Regulation is that the universities and specialized universities must now document that they have systems for checking that all study programmes comply with the requirements of the regulations. It is now also a requirement that the institutions must use the results of the quality work in the assessment of their study-programme portfolio.

The quality assurance in the pilot project showed that a lot of good quality work is taking place at the specialized universities. At the specialized universities that were able to

point to particularly good quality work, we saw that the quality work was firmly anchored in a strategy, as well as the board and management team at all levels, and that the quality work included good structures for reporting and allocating responsibilities. Moreover, we saw that the institutions promoted a quality culture that created engagement, allowed for active participation, provided opportunities for co-determination and resulted in good cooperation between students and staff. All of them systematically collected information from a variety of sources, internal and external, and used this to improve and develop study programmes and identify and remedy quality defects.

"Meanwhile, the pilot showed that many of the specialized universities have experienced challenges documenting that they have put in place systems for systematically checking that every study programme complies with the applicable regulations," says Brodahl.

Overall, the pilot showed that the Norwegian School of Economics and VID Specialised University met all of the requirements for systematic quality work, while the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, the Norwegian Academy of Music and the MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society need to make some adjustments to their systematic quality work before it can be assessed as satisfactory.

The systematic quality work of BI Norwegian Business School and the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences had not progressed far enough to satisfy the applicable requirements for quality work. In line with the conditions for taking part in the pilot project, these two will be added to NOKUT's ordinary quality-assurance schedule in relation to their quality work.

## THE SPECIALIZED UNIVERSITIES IN THE PILOT

- Oslo School of Architecture and Design
- BI Norwegian Business School
- MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society
- Norwegian School of Economics
- Norwegian School of Sport Sciences
- Norwegian Academy of Music
- VID Specialised University

Universities, specialized universities and university colleges are responsible for the quality of study programmes they offer and are required to have a system that ensures and improves the quality of the programmes. NOKUT's role is to provide advice and quality-assure the systematic quality work and accreditation of study programmes and institutions.

## POSITIVE FEEDBACK TO NOKUT'S SERIES OF SEMINARS ON QUALITY WORK

NOKUT brought together 170 participants from university colleges and universities and 90 from tertiary vocational schools in seminars on systematic quality work in 2018. Exchanging and sharing experiences and good examples from their quality work were on the agenda.

"This was a new kind of seminar and our expectations were high. Through presentations, discussions and group work, we wanted to contribute to the

exchange of experiences, knowledge about quality work and, not least, inspiration for the work on developing their systematic quality work," says Aslaug Louise Slette, senior adviser in the section for quality assurance. She helped organise several of the seminars.

She reports that many people said that it was useful to meet others who worked on the same thing but who might have a different approach to

them. The fact that several people from NOKUT's section for quality assurance were present and that participants could get answers to questions quickly was highlighted as positive.

"Facilitated meeting places are useful both for the institutions and for us, so we want to repeat this," Slette concludes.

## FEEDBACK FROM FOUR PARTICIPANTS AT THE SEMINARS ON QUALITY WORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION – THE REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDY PROGRAMMES

*How do you want NOKUT to work on educational quality in the future?*



**Madeleine Sjøbrend and Kateryna Krutskykh:** Both are advisers working on AACSB accreditation at the School of Economics and Business at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences.

"Seminars like this are very useful, but putting this on society's agenda and generating discussions and attention regarding quality is also important. In addition to this there is the work on Studiebarometeret, which is a very useful tool for assessing the situation and learning the status of the programmes."



**Anne Grethe Naustdal:** vice-dean for education at the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. **Lene Borgen Waage:** head of the project working on a new system for quality work at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.

"The way the seminar is designed, with group discussions and exchanges of experiences, is very good. It is very useful for us. The way NOKUT is now working on the quality-assurance process, whereby you bring together the institutions that require quality assurance at the same time and hold seminars like the one we are on now, is good for networking."

# QUALITY IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

A wave of supervised professional training is washing over Norwegian universities and university colleges, but many students are critical of the quality of the professional training of their programme. There is much to suggest that the quality of professional training placements depends on luck. Nevertheless, professional training will now constitute part of the study programmes of even more students in order to ensure work relevance. NOKUT therefore has a priority project within the area of professional training.

"To get a better overview of the area of supervised professional training, we have started a project whereby we collect and systematise the knowledge about professional training from various stakeholders with a stake in the area of professional training. In addition to disseminating this knowledge, we will use it as a basis for choosing follow-up projects," says senior adviser Ingvild Andersen Helseth in the department of analysis and development. She heads NOKUT's project on supervised professional training.

NOKUT wants the project to help people focus on relevant challenges and good practices, collate knowledge about which factors are important when it comes to successfully establishing good quality supervised professional training and create arenas in which key stakeholders can share experiences and knowledge.

Health and social subject programmes have been chosen as a priority area because professional training is such a key part of these programmes. There are also many known challenges in relation to professional training in these programmes. However, the project does also look at professional training in other subjects – subjects with long and short traditions in relation to professional training as a learning arena.

"Through the project, we cooperate with the study programmes, the world of work, the education authorities and other authorities that influence supervised professional training in different sectors. This ensures that we achieve a better effect from the follow-up projects we choose," she says.

### NEED FOR CHANGE

Another goal is to contribute to knowledge-based debate and forums for key stakeholders. The starting point for the entire project was the review of the comments in Studiebarometeret, which were collated in NOKUT's report "Til glede og besvær – praksis i høyere utdanning", "Pleasure and hassle – supervised professional training in higher education".

"Some of the results in the report are downright discouraging," says Ole Jacob Skodvin, director of analysis and development. He presented the results at one of NOKUT's breakfast seminars.

The students describe a system in need of improvement, quality assurance, predictability, equal treatment, transparency and clarification when it comes to students' rights and the educational institutions' responsibilities. Many students feel that when they report that they are not getting what they need from professional training, this is not followed up.

### WHAT DOES GETTING PROFESSIONAL TRAINING MEAN?

- Educational programmes governed by framework plans with professional training such as teacher education programmes and health and social subject programmes
- Study programmes (not governed by framework plans) with a long tradition of professional training such as medicine, theology and policing
- Study programmes that do not have a long tradition of professional training such as discipline-based subjects within the natural sciences, the humanities and social studies

"According to Section 2-3 of the Academic Supervision Regulation, mandatory professional training must be supervised, but the students' comments show that their perceptions of the supervisors' expertise vary greatly," he adds.

Students from 15 types of education also commented on the heavy workload imposed on them at the same time as the professional training, which involves many different work requirements. Several also commented that their experiences from professional training are not used in the teaching. They feel that this is a lost opportunity.

"We are looking forward to the White Paper on professional training, when NOKUT can contribute its knowledge and expertise," he concludes.

### LOOKING AT OUR RULES AND INSTRUMENTS

NOKUT ensures that the standard of professional training is good enough for society to have confidence in its quality. The results of the project will thus also be used to analyse and disseminate any need for changes to the regulations governing professional training and to NOKUT's and other agencies' instruments in this area.



# EVALUATION FOR AND OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

What is the status of educational quality within Norwegian social science? This was examined in a comprehensive evaluation from 2016 to 2018. The results establish that the quality status is generally good. Nonetheless, the expert panels had some advice regarding study programmes that could help to improve quality even further.

58 study programmes at ten institutions took part in the programme evaluations of the subjects areas sociology, political science and economics. The three expert panels that carried out the evaluations consisted of top researchers from the Netherlands, the UK, Sweden and Denmark who have worked as teachers and education managers.

The programme evaluations were conducted in parallel with the Research Council of Norway's evaluation of social science research. This made it possible to conduct a joint evaluation of the interaction between research and education in an innovative collaboration between NOKUT and the Research Council of Norway.

"The experts' conclusions are very interesting. Even though a lot of things about Norwegian social science education are good, it is striking that many of the challenges were common to all three of the subject areas. This applies not least to the need for more cooperation and a better division of responsibilities between the institutions, and the potential for improvements to the scope of method teaching," says Stephan Hamberg, head of evaluation and quality enhancement. He was responsible for NOKUT's part of the evaluation project.

## CREATING ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Following the project, the institutions have got to grips with the results. Of the three subject areas, it was the evaluation of the sociology programmes that undoubtedly generated the most debate in the media. The Norwegian Sociological Association, a professional society for sociologists and Master's students in sociology, arranged its own seminar on the results.

*"It's too early to establish how great an impact these evaluations will have on developing educational quality, but we can see that these evaluations could generate national debate within a subject area and at the same time contribute to concrete changes at programme level."*

"It's too early to establish how great an impact these evaluations will have on developing educational quality, but we can see that these evaluations could generate national debate within a subject area and at the same time contribute to concrete changes at programme level," says Hamberg, adding:

"For NOKUT's part, it is crucial that academic environments take account of the assessments and recommendations in the further development of their study programmes."

## FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATIONS

- The quality status is generally good for all subject areas.
- The study programmes are not particularly internationally oriented.
- The amount of method teaching in the study programmes is small and often occurs too late in the programmes. The teaching in quantitative methods in study programmes should in particular be improved.
- The forms of teaching and assessment are very traditional. There is remarkably little use of digital tools.
- There is a need for a stronger focus on coherent programme plans. A study programme should be greater than the sum of its parts.
- Small institutions often have less breadth in academic environments. To ensure that the programmes are properly grounded in research, small institutions should consider working with other institutions or making their programmes specialised, such that they better reflect the research in the academic environment.



## EVALUATION OF INTERPLAY

Based on the evaluations of research quality and educational quality, NOKUT and the Research Council of Norway conducted a pilot project that turned the spotlight on the interplay between education and research. The academic environments were the same as those that took part in NOKUT's programme evaluation.

"The parallel research and education evaluations provided a basis for the joint expert panel to assess the links between research and education. The interplay evaluations were a pilot project and made it clear how important it is to view these activities together," says Stephan Hamberg.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT FINDINGS

- It is important that the programmes originate from solid academic environments and that the teachers are themselves active researchers.
- The academic environments should be in a position to deliver research-based programmes that cover the entire breadth of the subject area.
- The research briefings at Bachelor's level should be improved. This includes increasing the focus on methods, the closer integration of methodology and academic subjects, and increasing the scope of Bachelor's assignments.

## CHANGED METHODOLOGY FOR EVALUATING PROGRAMMES

NOKUT conducts evaluations of various aspects of educational quality. Overall, the results provide a good knowledge base for the authorities, educational institutions and NOKUT. We are changing how we conduct our evaluations.

"In programme evaluations and interplay evaluations, a model has been developed in which the education and research are evaluated in the same process. Such evaluations are better suited to taking account of the entirety of the social mission of universities and university colleges. We will now examine how we can use this method in our future programme evaluations," says Øystein Lund, director of quality assurance.

"NOKUT cannot evaluate educational quality without simultaneously assessing the quality of the academic environment providing the education, as size, composition, skills profile, R&D activities and international networks," he concludes.

# FINANCIAL INSPECTION – A NEW TASK FOR NOKUT

In September 2018, the Ministry of Education and Research delegated responsibility for financial inspection to NOKUT. NOKUT thus gained 12 new staff members.



So what is financial inspection? We have spoken to Håvard Tvinnereim, head of financial inspection.

“We call it financial inspection, but it is more checking the use of funds allocated by the Ministry of Education and Research through the national budget. We look at the accounts, procurements they have made and their practices in relation to the use of the financial support,” he explains.

In 2018, the inspection assignments included private tertiary vocational schools and university colleges, as well as all of the student unions. From January 2019, NOKUT will also have responsibility for security and preparedness, corporate governance and the financial monitoring of all public universities and university colleges, as well as the following government agencies: the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), the Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services in Higher Education and Research (UNIT), the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), the Research Council of Norway and the Norwegian National Committees for Research Ethics.

“With the expansion of our tasks, we are now responsible for following up around 200 organisations. Around half

of them are private companies in which the Ministry of Education and Research has a stake. This represents a considerable expansion of our portfolio. These tasks also represent a significant change to NOKUT’s profile as a government body in the sector, since they differ from our existing activities,” says Tvinnereim.

## COORDINATION OF INSTRUMENTS

Unlike the professionally independent quality assurance NOKUT performs regarding educational quality, financial inspection is an administrative task for the Ministry of Education and Research.

“This means that the ministry can instruct us on how to perform our tasks, and it is the appeals body for our decisions. In practice, this would normally mean that we will still operate with a large degree of independence, and the two-instance principle in Norwegian administrative law also ensures a great deal of independence. One of the reasons for transferring the tasks out of the ministry is to allow a distancing from the way they are resolved,” he explains.

Although the two forms of quality assurance are differently oriented, Tvinnereim does not ignore the fact that it may in future be relevant to coordinate quality assurance from NOKUT that examines both educational quality and finances.

“We collaborate with the section responsible for assuring educational quality on methodology and the use of instruments. Since the transfer, we have worked to align our instruments with NOKUT’s other quality-assurance instruments. It is important that we are perceived by the institutions to be unified and coherent, and that together we help to fulfil NOKUT’s social mission,” he says.

## JOINT METHODOLOGY PROJECT

In 2018, NOKUT started a methodology project to learn more about the effects our various instruments have in the regulatory area and how they can be used most effectively. This is a joint project with the OECD, which we have contracted in as a sparring partner for the work.

Tvinnereim explains that it is a two-pronged project.

“The questions we are asking ourselves are: How do we implement the right measures to counter the challenges we face, and how do we use them proportionally with a view to achieving the greatest possible effect? And: How can we execute the measures using a minimum of governmental and institutional resources and with the

greatest possible effect for users and for society?”

The project includes both the pilot for the supervision of systematic quality work in tertiary vocational schools and the inspection of how selected tertiary vocational schools meet the requirement for internal control through their financial administration.

Through the work on the projects, NOKUT will first find relevant parameters for the pilot supervision, and we will then conduct the supervisory assessment and analyse the results. Finally, the supervisory process itself will be

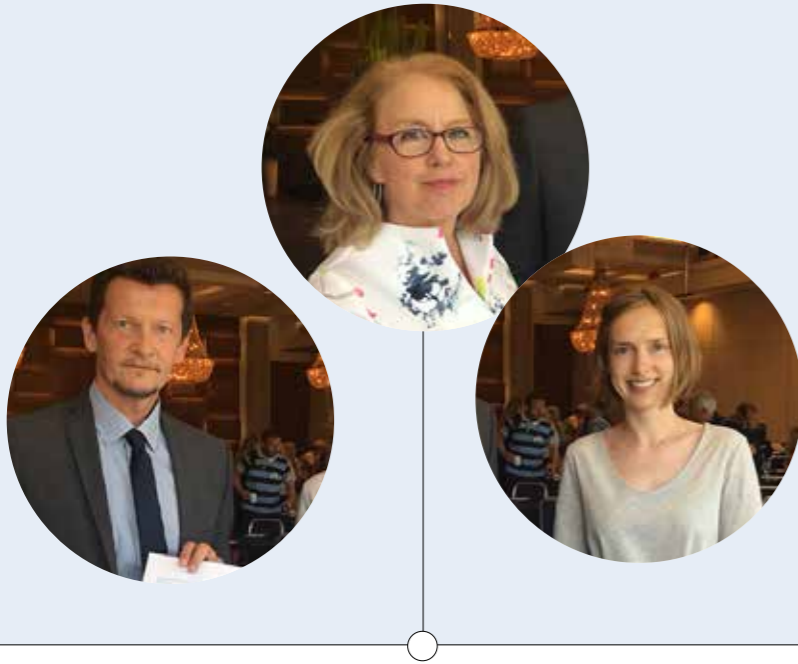
assessed by an external firm of auditors. They will also talk to the institutions involved in the pilot to get their opinions on the process.

“The four tertiary vocational school supervisory assessments that we started in 2018 are part of this project. In spring 2019, we will conduct more pilot supervisory assessments. We will analyse the effects of the applied methodology in relation to the different goals we have set,” Tvinnereim concludes.



# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

– May, June, July, August



## ADVICE ON IMPROVING THE FIVE-YEAR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

The international group of experts tasked with assessing the implementation of the five-year primary and lowersecondary teacher education programmes delivered its first recommendations on the further development of the new teacher Master's programmes to the Minister of Research and Higher Education **Iselin Nybø** in May. Their recommendations were based on the committee's experiences and conversations at the regional meetings with teacher educators in Norway. They presented their recommendations on the Norwegian primary and lowersecondary teacher education programmes at a national conference for teacher educators and participants from a number of professional training schools, organisations and authorities.

The international group of experts for primary and lower-secondary teacher education programmes was established by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2017. The group of experts is headed by Prof. **Marilyn Cochran-Smith** of Boston College in the US.

## NEW DIGITAL SERVICE FOR UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

NOKUT has launched a new digital service for applications from university colleges for new Bachelor's and Master's programmes. The new service provides better coordination, efficiency and quality in the application processes. The university colleges can also view their application history and will, in time, also be able to access ongoing and earlier applications to NOKUT.

This is the first step in the digitalisation of our services for universities and university colleges. The digitalisation is intended to make it easier for university colleges to apply and to make NOKUT's application processing more efficient.

One of our goals is to ensure that both we and the institutions will have a better overview of ongoing activities and history. This will be done by developing good databases, which in turn will form a basis for further development of services.

## AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION OF NORDIC QUALIFICATIONS

NOKUT launched a new service for people with comparable higher education from the Nordic countries who want to work or study in Norway. For the most important qualifications from each country, one can now download a confirmation from NOKUT's website that shows that the degree has been automatically recognised. This can be used immediately.

Automatic recognition will cover the vast majority of the current degree programmes in the Nordic region. The recognition document shows which degree the foreign education is equivalent to in the Norwegian education system. The study programmes covered range from Bachelor's degrees to PhDs.

## FROM PILOT TO PERMANENT RECOGNITION SCHEME

The pilot period for the recognition of foreign tertiary vocational education ended in June. 67 applications were received during the pilot. During the pilot period, NOKUT worked with academic experts in the field of Norwegian tertiary vocational education to establish a framework for the permanent recognition scheme.

From 1 January 2019, people with foreign tertiary vocational education from around the world have been able to apply to NOKUT to have it recognised.

## CHANGES TO THE NOKUT SECTION OF THE UNIVERSITIES AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGES ACT

Amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act came into force on 1 July. The section that deals with NOKUT's work was amended. The aim of the amendments was to make it possible for the Ministry of Education and Research to transfer more tasks to NOKUT in the future, while maintaining NOKUT's professional independence. NOKUT's remit and area of responsibility were continued.

# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

– May, June, July, August



## NOKUT AUDITED THE CONSTRUCTION-ENGINEERING PROGRAMMES

The first part of NOKUT's supervision of construction-engineering programmes at Bachelor's level was completed in June. The results so far indicate good cooperation with the vocational field, but weak grounding in research. The purpose of the supervision is to help improve the quality of the study programmes and ensure that they are offered in line with the requirements of the Academic Supervision Regulation.

The supervision covered the study programmes at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), UiT the Arctic University of Norway, the University of Agder, the University of Stavanger, the University of South-Eastern Norway,

Østfold University College, OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University and the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. Some of the study programmes did not meet all of the requirements. The relevant institutions were given a deadline of 1 May 2019 to improve their study programmes and document that the requirements of the Academic Supervision Regulation are being met or present realistic plans for how they can be met.

Each year, NOKUT conducts a review of a few selected quality indicators for study programmes in Norway. The supervision of the construction-engineering programmes was initiated on the basis of such a review.

## PRAISE IN INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION

In spring 2018, NOKUT was evaluated by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). ENQA concluded that NOKUT functions well, that we satisfy all of the European standards and that we have a good internal quality-management system.

The evaluation concluded that NOKUT should retain its European approval. It also provides a very complimentary description of Norway and the Norwegian knowledge- and trust-based model for quality-assuring higher education. The committee highlighted that the quality-assurance model does not unnecessarily burden institutions. They also emphasised the importance of NOKUT having assumed an ambassadorial role for quality in education and that we emphasise this publicly. In addition to this, they highlighted our internal plain-language work.

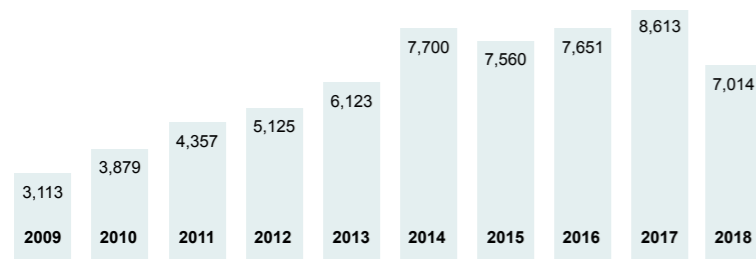
# FOREIGN EDUCATION

NOKUT helps to ensure that people with a foreign education can make effective use of their qualifications in Norway and that employers and educational institutions are well informed about what the foreign qualifications are equivalent to in Norway.

### WE DO THIS BY:

- › *recognising and assessing foreign education*
- › *providing information about foreign education and the recognition system in Norway*
- › *collating and analysing results and providing policy advice*

**NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATION:**



**TOP TEN COUNTRIES WHERE THE QUALIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN OBTAINED:**

	POLAND:	605
	SYRIA:	565
	UNITED KINGDOM:	428
	LITHUANIA:	379
	SERBIA:	315
	PHILIPPINES:	269
	INDIA:	253
	IRAQ:	218
	TURKEY:	210
	RUSSIA:	208



*“More than 60 per cent of those who apply for recognition of higher education come from European countries, and applicants from Eastern European countries account for a clear majority of these applicants. The top ten list for 2018 generally contains the same countries that made up the list in 2017. Poland has swapped places with Syria and is now tops the list.”*

**HOW DO WE RECOGNISE FOREIGN EDUCATION?**

We compare the educational systems, and the foreign education is assessed with the Norwegian educational system. When recognising foreign higher education, we assess the length of the education, the number of credits and whether the level is equivalent to a Norwegian Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree or PhD.

This means that NOKUT assesses the level, scope and academic content of the education and training in relation to Norwegian upper secondary education in the relevant subject.

The purpose of NOKUT’s recognition is to give applicants a better chance of entering the Norwegian labour market.

Recognition of foreign vocational education and training also constitutes subject-specific recognition.

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

NOKUT received 7,014 applications for recognition of foreign higher education in 2018. This is almost 19 per cent fewer applications than in 2017. As expected, there was a large reduction in the number of applications from Syria, but the reductions were also large for countries that migrant workers typically come from, such as Poland and Lithuania. We have seen a peak in the number of applications from migrant workers.

The average processing time was three months in 2018. This is the same as in 2017. The average processing time for completed applications was just over 20 days in 2018. The time it takes to process an application varies greatly. In cases involving completed qualifications from European countries, the processing time is often just a few days. In more complicated cases involving countries outside Europe, especially in cases that require the verification of educational documents, the processing time can be longer. The long processing time was also due to

NOKUT having applications that were still awaiting processing following the peak in applications in 2017.

**THE UVD-PROCEDURE**

NOKUT has a special procedure for people whose application for recognition of foreign higher education is rejected because of missing documentation or because it is not possible to verify the educational documentation.

The procedure is known as the UVD-procedure, is based on interviews with experts and results in an individual decision concerning recognition of the education.

To be considered for this procedure, the applicant must meet requirements regarding residency, completed education and language. In 2018, 106 educational cases were assessed using the procedure.

**PROCESSING TIME:**

The period from when an applicant registers their application in the portal to when it has been fully processed. This also includes the time it takes before NOKUT starts processing and the time it takes the applicant to submit more documentation when NOKUT requests it.

**NOKUT HAS THREE RECOGNITION SCHEMES:**

- Recognition of foreign higher education
- Recognition of foreign vocational education and training
- Recognition of foreign tertiary vocational education. Commencement in January 2019

**EVALUATION SCHEMES**

NOKUT has three different services in which we do not make a decision on recognition, but rather issue an evaluation or give advice.

**TURBO EVALUATION FOR EMPLOYERS**

NOKUT offers an evaluation of the scope and level of foreign higher education to educational institutions that have chosen relevant applicants for further assessment for admission.

**TURBO EVALUATION FOR ADMISSION TO A PHD PROGRAMME**

NOKUT offers an evaluation of the scope and level of foreign higher education to educational institutions that have chosen relevant applicants for further assessment for admission.

**QUALIFICATION ASSESSMENTS FOR REFUGEES**

NOKUT has a procedure for refugees who either cannot document their education or do not have permanent residency in Norway or lack sufficient linguistic proficiency to permit testing. They may undergo a qualification assessment that is valid for three years. This is based on an interview. It does not result in a legally binding decision, but is a document that may be used to apply for work or further studies in Norway.

NOKUT started qualification assessments in autumn 2017. We conducted 83 qualification assessments in 2018.

**INFORMATION AND NETWORK COOPERATION**

NOKUT actively strives to provide the best possible information for our applicants and other stakeholders in the field of recognition.

**WE DO THIS THROUGH:**

- [information about recognition and authorisation for regulated professions \(Norwegian assistance centre for the EU Professional Qualifications Directive\)](#)
- [information about Norwegian and foreign education \(Norwegian ENIC-NARIC centre\)](#)
- [the e-learning programme](#)
- [NOKUT’s country database](#)
- [The GSU List \(Higher Education Entrance Qualification for foreign applicants\)](#)
- [professional seminars and conferences](#)

# HIGH DEMAND FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING RECOGNISED

Since its inception in 2016, NOKUT has received 1,457 applications for recognition of foreign vocational education and training as equivalent to corresponding Norwegian certificates of apprenticeship or craft certificates. In 2018, 253 skilled workers' education and training was recognised as equivalent. Most of them came from Poland and were wood productcarpenters.

"The recognition scheme is popular with both workers and employers. An internal review of the scheme conducted in spring 2018 showed that recognition from NOKUT contributed to workers getting higher pay and more responsibility," says Silje Molander, who is head of recognition of VET and TVET in the Department of Foreign Education.

NOKUT received a total of 665 applications in 2018 and processed 678 applications. This is on a par with the year before. Even though the scheme only covers five countries, Molander points out that qualifications within 19 different fields can be recognised.

"Some cases can take a long time, especially when we have to obtain and translate foreign curricula into Norwegian. Qualifications that have been evaluated by experts provide a precedent for the next time a similar case is submitted. This has a big effect on the processing time. In such cases, this now takes an average of around 20 days," she says.

The average processing time for all cases is 83 days. 36 per cent of cases were processed within five days, and 53 per cent of cases were processed in under 30 days. The average processing time for cases where there was no precedent was 150 days in 2018.

"We know that many workers from countries other than the five that are currently covered want to be included in the scheme. The Ministry of Education and Research wants to expand the number of countries or qualifications, and we will strive to achieve expansion in 2019," Molander concludes.

*"An internal review of the scheme conducted in spring 2018 showed that recognition from NOKUT contributed to workers getting higher pay and more responsibility."*



## "MAKES IT EASIER TO GET A JOB"

From the launch in 2016 up to the end of 2018, 115 plumbers have had their foreign vocational training recognised as equivalent to Norwegian qualification. Krzysztof Piotr Kasinski had his Polish plumber training recognised in January 2018.

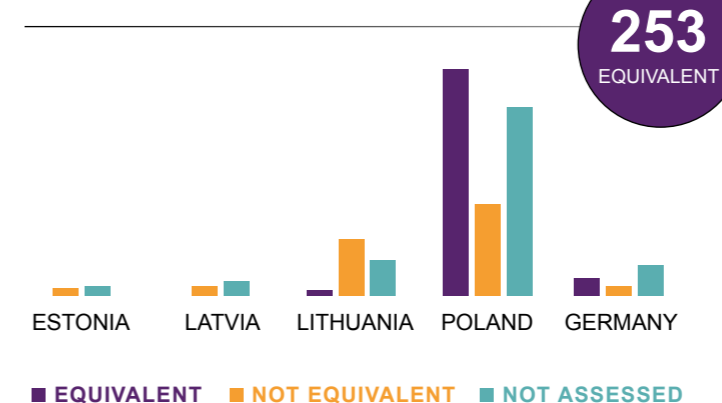
Kasinski found it difficult to get a job without recognition. He therefore applied to NOKUT, and a year ago he received his recognition.

"I went to several interviews, but without recognition of my plumber training I did not get a job. They wanted a recognition document from NOKUT. With this in place, I quickly got a job with a large plumbing company," he says.

*Would you advise others to get their training approved?*

"Yes, absolutely. It makes it easier to get a job."

DECISIONS PER COUNTRY IN 2018



← Applications were not assessed because either the qualifications or the country the education was from were not covered by the recognition scheme. Applications may also not have been assessed because the necessary documentation was not submitted.



**Lisbeth Svendsen**  
executive vice president for  
production at Nortura

“The NOKUT recognition scheme is important for Nortura because one of the requirements for our skilled workers is that their crafts and journeyman’s certificates must be Norwegian in origin or recognised by NOKUT. This ensures the proper equal treatment of our employees. Although we are interested in being able to show that we are focusing on quality and skilled workers, it is also important for us to have confidence that our skilled workers are indeed skilled workers,” says Lisbeth Svendsen, Executive Vice President Production at Nortura.

For each employee at Nortura, it is important to be able to point to crafts and journeyman’s certificates recognised by NOKUT. In addition to this being a hallmark of quality, it is also proof that they meet the criteria for entitlement to the skilled-worker supplement.

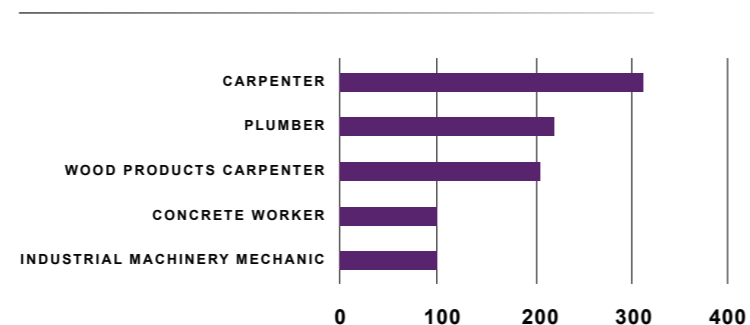
Nortura SA is a cooperative owned by 18,800 egg and meat producers. The company has employees from a total of 70 nations, and in its core operations (slaughtering and meat cutting) the proportion of skilled workers in many factories is around 90 per cent.

### ABOUT THE RECOGNITION SCHEME:

The scheme was established at the initiative of employer and employee organisations, and priority is given to qualifications in high demand by these parties. 19 qualifications from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Germany are covered by the scheme. Around 100 experts assess the vocational content of the qualification.

The recognition scheme for vocational education and training has gradually been expanded, and in October 2018 it was extended to cover the qualifications chef, institutional chef, skin-care worker and motor-vehicle mechanic for light and heavy-duty vehicles. Concrete worker, retail butcher, hairdresser, glazier, industrial machinery mechanic, meat cutter, painter, bricklayer, cabinet-maker, upholsterer, sausage maker, plumber, butcher, wood products carpenter and carpenter were already covered by the scheme.

#### TOP FIVE TYPES OF APPLICATION 2016-2018



→  
Carpenters make up the largest group whose education has been recognised as equivalent since our launch in 2016. Wood products carpenters made up the largest group whose education was recognised as equivalent in 2018.

## DIGITALISATION ON SCHEDULE

In recent years, NOKUT has modernised its communication and services for applicants with foreign education. This work will continue in the years to come.

NOKUT has previously developed and launched a self-service portal for applications for recognition of foreign vocational education and training and foreign higher education. In 2018, we developed a similar applicant portal for the recognition of foreign tertiary vocational education.

“With these new recognition schemes incorporated into the applicant portal, applicants can more easily find information and apply for recognition of their education. We have also modernised and further developed the application-processing system used for recognising foreign education,” says Stig Arne Skjerven, director of foreign education.

The new technical solutions were developed in a close collaboration between the Department of Foreign Education and the Section of Digitalisation and ICT.

“Together we have come up with solutions that are better for both our users and the case officers,” he concludes.

#### BETTER EQUIPPED FOR FUTURE CHANGES

NOKUT will continue to streamline its internal work processes in 2019.

“The focus on digitalisation is important in order to be prepared to leverage the fastmoving external technology landscape. This will ensure that we

are better equipped to meet any need of change, and we will be able to offer services in a more consumer-oriented way. We will for instance be able to free capacity so we can strengthen other tasks that over all will result in better services for users and society,” says Nina Strand, head of digitalisation and ICT.

Digitalisation has made it possible to offer greater volumes of quality-assured data for various purposes.

“In 2019, we will also look into how we can upgrade and integrate NOKUT’s country database and the GSU List into our application processing solution. This will facilitate more customized information for our various user groups. Digitalisation carried out in the field of foreign education has provided better and more efficient application processing, and we have developed a platform for future automation of the processes,” says Strand.

#### DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION OF NOKUT’S DECISIONS

The tasks are becoming ever more complex, and the need for cooperation will probably increase in the future. This means that our digital solutions must foster cooperation and knowledge sharing.

“The latest release of NOKUT’s application portal makes it possible to



“Digitalisation helps improve the quality and efficiency of the processing in the recognition schemes”

**Stig Arne Skjerven**  
director of foreign education

automate processes and transfer data to other systems. This means that we can make NOKUT’s decisions available for relevant interests through the database for the recognition of foreign study programmes, or GAUS. GAUS will then contain information about who the decision applies to, what education has been assessed, accreditation comments and what the decision concludes,” says Strand.

The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service and educational institutions can use this information when processing applications for admission and credit transfers from students with a foreign education.

“This will make it easier to verify the documentation they receive from applicants,” she concludes.

#### DIGITALISATION GOALS

- Automate processes wherever possible
- Facilitate sharing of data, statistics and reporting
- Contribute to the collection and sharing of data regarding the quality situation with other stakeholders

# INFORMATION WORK IN A DIGITAL AGE

NOKUT is the national information centre for higher education (ENIC-NARIC centre) and is responsible for providing quality information about foreign education systems and qualifications for the university and university college sector, employers, the integration system and people with foreign qualifications.

“The e-learning portal is crucial to our information work. The first module was developed in collaboration with the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). The portal now consists of four modules. NOKUT took over responsibility for the entire portal in 2018,” says Tove Knudsen, acting head of information on foreign education.

In 2018, NOKUT and the Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service jointly developed a new e-learning module on the Higher Education Entrance Qualification for applicants with foreign education.

“At the end of 2018, there were more than 1,300 registered users of it. The e-learning modules’ main target group is people whose work involves advising immigrants – largely programme advisers, career advisers, teachers in adult education and staff in the social welfare system. The goal is to ensure that users are able to provide even better help for people with foreign qualifications,” Knudsen explains.

In 2018, NOKUT received 11,430 enquiries by telephone and email. 198 applicants also visited us in person.

## IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS

During 2018, NOKUT held seminars on selected countries for institutions and authorisation bodies. We particularly focused on countries that are included in the government’s Panorama strategy for higher education and research cooperation: Brazil, India, Japan, China, Russia and South Africa.

The Panorama strategy is intended to facilitate more comprehensive longer-term cooperation with the target countries within higher education and research, with a view to more high-quality cooperation in areas of particular interest to Norway.

## THE COUNTRY DATABASE PROVIDES HELP FOR SELF-HELP

NOKUT’s country database contains information about the education systems of key countries, NOKUT’s practices when evaluating education

and degrees from these countries, and relevant sources of further information.

“The country database now contains information about 59 countries. In 2018, we updated the information on many countries and added five new ones, including China, Bangladesh and Iceland. These countries are of particular interest to the education sector, the social-welfare system or society as whole. The latest country to be added is Egypt,” says Knudsen.

In 2018, NOKUT began to include relevant information about foreign vocational education and training and foreign tertiary vocational education in the country database.

*“At the end of 2018, there were more than 1,300 registered users of the e-learning module. Our goal is to ensure that users are able to provide even better help for people with foreign qualifications.”*

## NEW DIGITAL SOLUTIONS IN SIGHT

Digital advances enable information to be disseminated in new ways.

“In order to provide even better information when asked questions about the evaluation of foreign qualifications, we have now started planning a new digital solution for the country database. We are working to integrate country and qualification information with our application and case-processing system. NOKUT possesses valuable data that we would like to disseminate in a better way,” explains Knudsen.

She adds that this will result in people with foreign qualifications and employees receiving more accurate and suitable information. Thanks to this, some groups of applicants will have less need to actually apply for recognition of their foreign education. This will save applicants and society as a whole both time and resources. In 2018, NOKUT also carried out a pilot project in which we investigated whether it was possible to create a chatbot that could answer some of the most

common enquiries NOKUT receive. The pilot was promising, but more work is required before we can start to use it.

“The recognition of foreign qualifications is a complex area. A chatbot cannot currently replace communication with knowledgeable staff, although with time this and other digital tools could allow us to reach even more people,” Knudsen concludes.

NOKUT offers information and advice in response to technical recognition questions. We provide

- information about all of the Norwegian authorisation and recognition schemes
- guidance and advice in response to technical recognition questions
- information that can help people get into study programmes in Norway or abroad
- information on foreign education systems and the Norwegian education system

## THE GSU LIST

Overview of the types of foreign education that meet the requirements for Higher Education Entrance Qualification in Norway for applicants with a foreign education. The list shows types of education by country. The GSU List is used in the admissions process for applicants with a foreign education, and for recognising foreign education. The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund uses the list when allocating educational support for study programmes abroad.

NOKUT is responsible for the list, which is updated twice a year: on 15 March and on 15 November.



# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

– September, October, November, December



## DIRECTOR OF QUALITY ASSURANCE ELECTED TO ENQA BOARD

**Øystein Lund**, director of quality assurance, was elected to the board of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) at the members' meeting in October.

NOKUT's former director of quality assurance, **Tove Blytt Holmen**, simultaneously ended her second term as a board member. She was thanked for her efforts in the international arena over 20 years.

ENQA is an important member organisation that helps create confidence in higher education in Europe. This work is necessary in order to provide good conditions for international cooperation at Norwegian universities and university colleges.



## PROPOSAL FOR NEW ACCREDITATION MODEL

NOKUT has proposed a new draft accreditation model. It divides the process into three phases: prequalification, accreditation and follow-up.

The changes will enable NOKUT to expend more resources on quality assurance, evaluation and other follow-up of the more than 4,500 study programmes offered at Norwegian universities, university colleges and tertiary vocational schools. We are planning one or more pilots to test the proposed model.

### PHASE 1 PREQUALIFICATION

- Applicant meeting
- Application from tertiary vocational school or university college, general provision
- Decision by NOKUT

### PHASE 2 ACCREDITATION

- External expert evaluation of the study programme managed by the tertiary vocational schools or university college
- Assessment by expert panel at NOKUT
- Decision by NOKUT

### PHASE 3 FOLLOW-UP

- NOKUT assesses the documentation related to statutory internal control



## THREE TERTIARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS WITH NEW ACCREDITED SUBJECT AREAS

At the end of October, NOKUT accredited three subject areas:

- Fagskolen i Østfold (Tertiary Vocational School in Østfold): health
- Bårdar Akademiet (Bårdar Academy): commercial acting – interpretation and communication
- Fagskolen Innlandet (Inland Tertiary Vocational School): building and construction engineering

With accreditation for a subject area, a tertiary vocational school has the authority to create and modify study programmes within the subject area without having to apply to NOKUT. We want more tertiary vocational schools to become equipped to assume such responsibility.

These tertiary vocational schools have already been accredited in the following subject areas:

- AOF Haugaland: health and childhood
- Ernst G. Mortensens Stiftelse – Høyskolen Kristiania (Ernst G. Mortensen Foundation – Kristiania University College): design, communication and technology
- Norges grønne fagskole (VEA – Norway's green tertiary vocational school: green design and environmental studies)



## NEW ROUND OF EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS PASSPORT FOR REFUGEES

The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees is a three-year European collaborative project organised by the Council of Europe and supported by the Ministry of Education and Research. In November, the project's second evaluation meeting was held in Greece. 50 refugees were interviewed in the space of one week and 43 qualifications passports were issued. This is a new record.

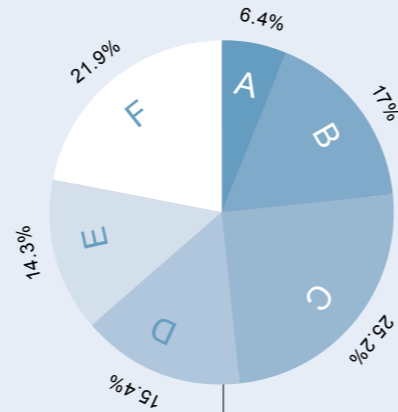
The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees is intended to make it easier for refugees to get a job and gain admission to further studies. Qualifications passports are based on NOKUT's established schemes for evaluating the educational backgrounds of refugees who are missing all or some of their documentation.

The refugees undergo a standardised evaluation of their formal qualifications. The final assessments list the qualifications they have obtained or the number of years of higher education they have completed. Qualifications passports also contain information about relevant work experience and language skills.

A total of six rounds of interviews were completed in the project in 2018. NOKUT is responsible for the methodology, training and quality assurance of the evaluations in the project.

# THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

– September, October, November, December



## LAST SFU MAGAZINE FROM NOKUT

In November, we issued the ninth and last edition of the [SFU magazine](#). We have shared a lot of knowledge about and from the leading academic communities at universities and university colleges in Norway during the five years the magazine has existed.

SFU stands for Sentre for Fremragende Utdanning (Centres for Excellence in Education). The SFU scheme was established in 2010, and there are currently eight such centres. Responsibility for the SFU scheme was transferred to the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) in 2019.

## NEW SERVICE: VERIFICATION OF NOKUT'S DECISIONS

A new service, whereby employers, educational institutions and others can obtain confirmation that the content of a NOKUT decision is correct, came into being in November.

This is a free service, and NOKUT responds within five working days.

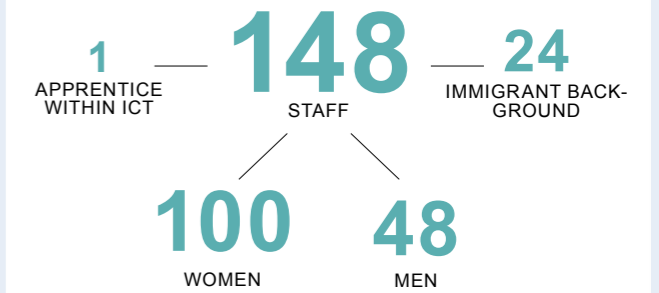
## NO CHANGE FOR NURSING STUDENTS

The proportion failing the national module examination in anatomy, physiology and biochemistry was roughly identical to that in 2017. This is shown by the results for the examination held in December.

The national results were unchanged, although some changes were to be seen at an institutional level, where progress has been made in some places. NOKUT will analyse the figures in more detail in order to learn more about the reasons behind this improvement.

The national module examination can be compared with national tests for students in higher education. NOKUT arranges national module examinations within the professional programmes for accounting and auditing, primary and lower secondary school teachers and nursing.

# THIS IS NOKUT



NOKUT is an independent expert body that reports to the Ministry of Education and Research.



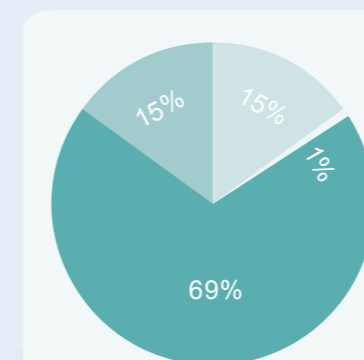
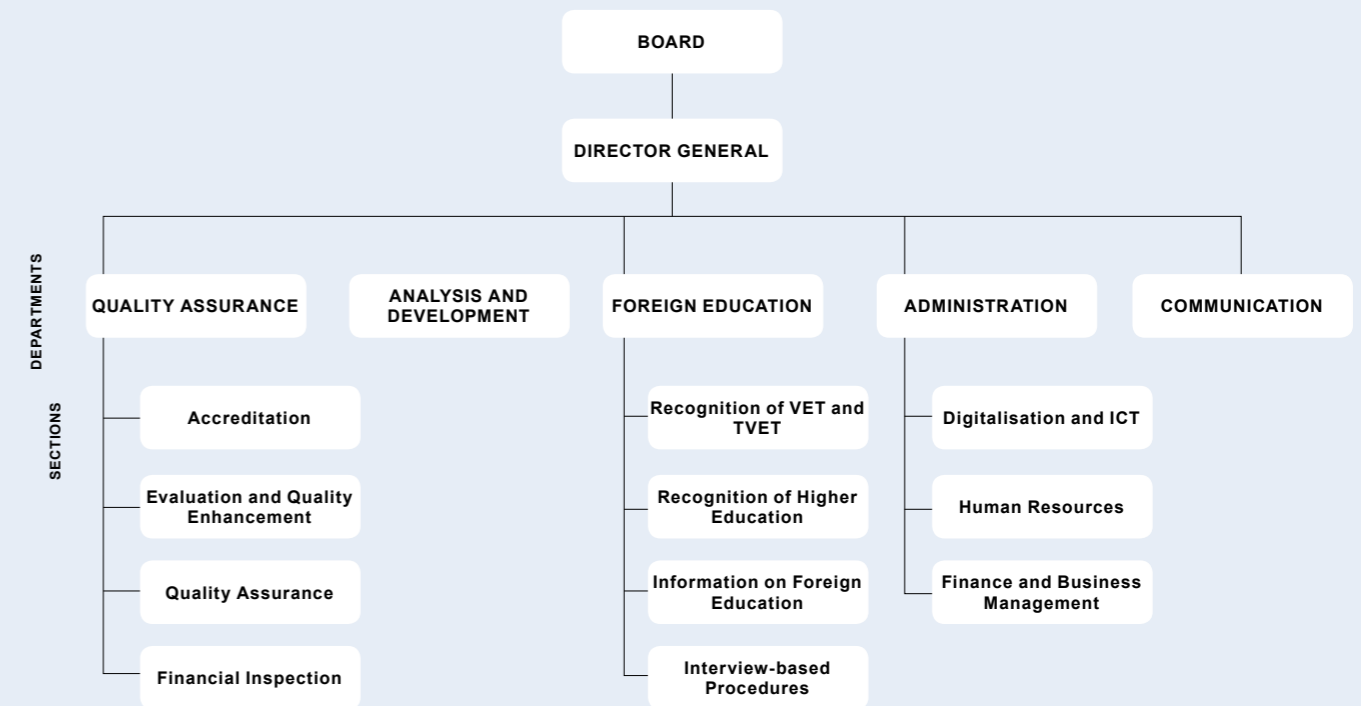
NOKUT uses 900 external experts for its accreditation, quality assurance, evaluations, recognition of foreign education and projects.



NOKUT's remit and most of its tasks are defined in the Universities and University Colleges Act and the Tertiary Vocational Education Act, as well as the associated regulations issued by the Ministry of Education and Research.



NOKUT was allocated NOK 169,482 million in the Ministry of Education and Research's budget.



### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF EMPLOYEES

CERTIFICATE OF APPRENTICESHIP	1%
PHD	15%
OTHER TERTIARY EDUCATION 2-4 YEARS	15%
MASTER'S DEGREE OR EQUIVALENT	69%



NOKUT is Eco-Lighthouse certified



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