

Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education - NOKUT

Tove Blytt Holmen



The Quality Reform of Norwegian Higher Education

- Change in governance at the institutional level
- Increased institutional autonomy
- New funding formula for the institutions
- NOKUT – The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
- New degree structure
- New forms of student guidance, evaluation and assessment
- New financial support to students
- Internationalisation



Higher Education in Norway

- 4 universities
- 6 specialised university institutions (economics and business administration, agriculture, veterinary science, sport and physical education, music, architecture)
- 26 + 2 (arts) university colleges
- More than 20 private colleges
- 180.000 students in 2002
- 158.300 in public (state) institutions
- 21.300 in private institutions



NOKUT - Mandate

- Evaluation of institutional quality assurance systems (institutional audits)
- Accreditation of higher education institutions (HEIs) and programmes
- Approval of vocational education (tertiary, but not HE)
- Recognition of foreign education
- Quality assessments for other purposes



Categories of HEIs and their belonging powers

	Universities	Specialised universities	Accredited university colleges	Non-accredited
Phd.				
Master				
Bachelor				



Power to give all study programmes



Power is limited. The institution can not offer study programmes in the field without accreditation and a final decision by The Ministry of Education.

Main steps in an accreditation procedure

1. Initial accreditation is started with an application from an institution (application is public)
2. NOKUT has decided upon an expert panel of which the institution has been allowed to comment upon beforehand
3. Site-visit?
4. Draft report for quality check?
5. Report is sent to the institution for general comments before NOKUT makes the final decision.
6. Report + comments from institution + NOKUTs decision are made public
7. The Ministry has made the final decision on degree or institutional category



When quality fails

- If an (initial) accreditation application is rejected, NOKUT may decide that up to two years must elapse before a new application may be submitted.
- If NOKUT finds that an institution no longer fulfills the conditions for accreditation, the institution shall be allowed a time limit of six months to implement measures to improve this.
- NOKUT's decision to withdraw accreditation of a study programme shall be sent to the institution concerned with a copy to the Ministry. The institution shall withdraw the study programme immediately.
- NOKUT's decision to withdraw accreditation of an institution shall be sent to the Ministry, which shall withdraw all rights entailed by the accreditation



Appeals

- NOKUTs decisions - other than the judgements done by the external panels - can be appealed to an appeals board appointed by the Ministry.



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Standards

STANDARD is the overall description of quality in a given area and given by specifying criteria

Standards are given for:

- ✓ Shorter programmes of ½ year until two years
- ✓ Bachelor – 3 years
- ✓ Master + 2 years
- ✓ Ph D + 3years
- ✓ Accredited college
- ✓ Specialised university
- ✓ University



Criteria

Programme standards:

- Curriculum
- Teacher qualifications
- Infrastructure
- Quality assurance

Institution standards:

- * Well functioning QA systems
- * Already gained awarding powers
- * Qualifications of staff
- * Infrastructure



External Experts

- NOKUT appoints experts to conduct evaluations/ accreditations.
- Expert Panel consists of 2 – 5 members.
- There will be one student member in each panel for audits and institutional accreditation
- Panels for accrediting programmes consist of academics only
- Panels for accrediting MA, PhD and institutions have to have at least one member from abroad.



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