

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

Register Committee

Ref. RC12/2014/08

Ver. 1.0

Date 2014-05-22

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1. The application of 13/03/2014 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee considered the external review report of May 2013 on the compliance of NOKUT with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The Register Committee found that the report provides clear evidence and analysis of how NOKUT complies with ESG.
3. The Register Committee further considered the comments on the external review report provided by NOKUT with its application.
4. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from NOKUT (response of 07/05/2014).

Analysis:

5. In considering NOKUT's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee only took into account audit, accreditation and revision of accreditation, carried out for higher education institutions or programmes. Other activities (e.g. NOKUT's responsibilities as regards recognition of foreign qualifications) are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the application inclusion on the Register.
6. With regard to the specific European Standards and Guidelines, the Register Committee considered the following:
7. **ESG 2.1:** While the external review panel welcomed NOKUT's flexible approach it also expressed some concerns whether all aspects of Part 1 of the ESG are sufficiently explicitly embedded in its processes and criteria. This matter has therefore been flagged.
8. **ESG 2.4:** The Register Committee received clarification from NOKUT on the training processes for student reviewers, setting out that students are trained in the same way as other reviewers.
9. **ESG 2.6:** The review panel referred to the introduction of more systematic follow-up mechanisms, expected for late 2013. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from NOKUT on the developments since the external review took place.

Given that the introduction of the new follow-up mechanisms has been delayed until late 2014, the issue has been flagged.

10. **ESG 3.7:** The review report mentioned that NOKUT involves students on its expert groups, except for initial accreditation of programmes. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from NOKUT on the reasons for not involving students in these reviews.

While the Register Committee acknowledged NOKUT's effort to simplify its initial programme accreditation procedure in general, it underlined that as long as the procedure includes an assessment by a group of experts the standard requires that group to include (a) student(s). The Register Committee was not persuaded by the argument that an assessment of a planned programme by students had less value added than by other peers. This matter has therefore been flagged.

Conclusion:

11. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that NOKUT substantially complies with the ESG and, therefore, approved the application for inclusion on the Register.
12. NOKUT's inclusion shall be valid until 31/05/2018¹.
13. The following issues have been flagged for particular attention when considering a potential application for renewal of inclusion. NOKUT is expected to address these issue(s) specifically in its next self-evaluation report, setting out whether the issue has been resolved or indicating what progress has been made. NOKUT is further responsible for informing the coordinator of the next external review and the review panel of the need to address these issues in the external review report.

ESG 2.1: Embedding of ESG Part 1

It should receive attention whether all aspects of part 1 of the ESG are explicitly and firmly embedded in NOKUT's criteria and processes.

ESG 2.6: Follow-up procedures

Attention should be given to the implementation of follow-up activities for accreditation of new programmes and for institutional audits, as well as to their effectiveness in practice.

ESG 3.7: Participation of students in initial programme accreditation

It should receive attention whether students have been included in expert groups for initial programme accreditation, provided the process includes an assessment by a group of experts.

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