

# **REGULATIONS no. 96 of 1 February 2010: Regulations concerning quality assurance and quality development in higher education and tertiary vocational education**

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## **Regulations concerning quality assurance and quality development in higher education and tertiary vocational education**

**Legal basis:** Issued by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research on 1 February 2010 pursuant to section 1-6, second paragraph, section 2-1, section 3-1 and section 3-4 of Act no. 15 of 1 April 2005 relating to Universities and University Colleges (the Universities and University Colleges Act) and the Act no. 56 of 20 June 2003 relating to tertiary vocational education (the Tertiary Vocational Education Act).

### **Chapter 1. General provisions**

#### **Section 1-1** *Scope of the regulations*

These regulations relate to quality assurance and quality development in higher education and tertiary vocational education, as well as the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education's (NOKUT) processing of cases and determination of standards pursuant to chapters 1, 2 and 3 of the Universities and University Colleges Act, as well as approval of education and providers pursuant to section 2 of the Tertiary Vocational Education Act.

#### **Section 1-2** *NOKUT's objective and delimitation*

- (1) NOKUT is a professionally independent government agency, with the mandate to monitor/externally assure the quality of higher education and tertiary vocational education in Norway.
- (2) Pursuant to section 2-1, second paragraph, of the Universities and University Colleges Act, the objective of NOKUT's work is to contribute towards ensuring high educational quality in the study programmes provided by the institutions, as well as ensuring that society can have confidence in the quality

of Norwegian higher education, tertiary vocational education and recognized higher education from other countries.

### **Section 1-3** *NOKUT's external quality assurance activities*

Within the framework determined in legislation and regulations, NOKUT shall assure the quality of the education at Norwegian institutions providing higher education and tertiary vocational education, as well as carrying out other administrative activities. The external quality assurance activities encompass both inspections and support for the institutions in their quality development work.

### **Section 1-4** *NOKUT's execution of administrative authority*

When executing administrative responsibilities imposed by legislation and regulations, NOKUT shall have an organization and a working method that ensure that the objective of NOKUT's work is safeguarded, as well as ensuring that society has confidence in NOKUT as a professionally independent government administrative agency.

### **Section 1-5** *NOKUT's responsibilities*

#### *(1) In general:*

- supervise that institutions follow the requirements determined by legislation and regulations within the administrative scope of NOKUT
- carry out purposeful development work in order to contribute to ensuring that the quality of higher education and tertiary vocational education in Norway is of a high international standard
- guide and advise in relevant areas, as well as provide information to parties in the sector and the rest of society
- ensure that the activities of NOKUT are in accordance with international rules, standards and practice

#### *(2) Higher education:*

- accredit institutions and study programmes
- revise the accreditations
- evaluate the institution's internal quality assurance systems
- make evaluations in order to assess the quality of higher education

#### *(3) Tertiary vocational education:*

- approve tertiary vocational education and vocational areas
- revise tertiary vocational education and vocational areas
- approve quality assurance systems for providers of tertiary vocational education.

#### *(4) General recognition:*

- accredit higher education (general recognition)
- facilitate a coordinated national practice of recognition pursuant to section 3-5, fifth paragraph, of the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges, and advise the institutions
- spread information about the institutions' decisions relating to recognition of higher education
- act as and operate an information centre in accordance with the Lisbon Convention and represent Norway in the ENIC network, cf. Article X.3. of the Lisbon Convention
- keep and maintain the list over higher education entrance qualification for applicants with an education from a foreign country (the GSU list)

**Section 1-6** *NOKUT's instruments*

In accordance with the objective of NOKUT's activities, NOKUT may use other instruments and carry out other measures than those stated in legislation and regulations. NOKUT makes its own decisions as to which measures it considers to be appropriate.

**Section 1-7.** *Appointment of experts*

- (1) NOKUT appoints experts to evaluate the quality assurance systems of universities and university colleges, cf. section §2-2, conduct evaluations in connection with applications for the accreditation of study programmes and institutions and revisions of accreditations, cf. Chapter 3, as well as to recommend the recognition of study programmes or providers in tertiary vocational education pursuant to Chapter 5 of the regulations. NOKUT also appoints experts to conduct evaluations that are significant for being able to assess the quality of higher education. The experts must submit reports about such evaluation.
- (2) NOKUT stipulates the criteria for the qualifications of the experts and the provisions governing the appointment of such experts, as well as their mandate. NOKUT determines more detailed provisions concerning the procedure.

**Section 1-8** *A quorum and the requirement of a majority vote*

The Board of NOKUT has a quorum for dealing with issues pursuant to these regulations when the Chairperson or Chairperson's deputy and four other members of the board are present. In the case of a tied vote, the chairman has the casting vote.

**Section 1-9** *Relationship to the Norwegian Public Administration Act*

The Public Administration Act applies when dealing with cases pursuant to these regulations, with the following exceptions and definitions:

- a) Decisions made pursuant to sections 2-2, 2-3, 3-1, 3-2, 3-4, 3-5, 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, 5-4, 5-5, 6-1 and 6-2 are counted as individual decisions pursuant to section 2, first paragraph, letter b, of the Public Administration Act.
- b) Only a party to whom a decision directly applies may appeal against a decision made by NOKUT.
- c) NOKUT's professional assessment of the facts in connection with a decision made pursuant to sections 2-2, 2-3, 3-1, 3-2, 3-4, 3-5, 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, 5-4 and 5-5 may not be appealed against.

### **Section 1-10** *Facilitation and information*

- (1) Institutions that are subject to NOKUT's external quality assurance and supervision activities must ensure conditions that make it possible for NOKUT to be able to execute its responsibilities in accordance with legislation and regulations.
- (2) NOKUT may demand the necessary and relevant information and accounts and undertake investigations in order to carry out its supervisory responsibilities in accordance with legislation and regulations

## **Chapter 2. Internal quality assurance system at universities and university colleges**

### **Section 2-1** *Requirements as to the quality assurance system*

- (1) Universities and university colleges are to have a system for their quality assurance work that ensures continuous improvements, provides satisfactory documentation of the work and reveals deficiencies in quality.
- (2) The quality assurance system shall safeguard and contribute to quality development for the education as a whole, including practical training. The system must include all the processes that are significant for the quality of the study programme, from information to potential applicants to the completion of the course, including the relevance of the study programme for working life.
- (3) NOKUT determines, in cooperation with the sector, the criteria according to which the quality assurance system is to be evaluated.

### **Section 2-2** *Evaluation of the institutions' quality assurance systems*

- (1) NOKUT shall evaluate the institutions' internal quality assurance systems. No more than six years is to elapse between each evaluation of the individual institution's quality assurance system. NOKUT determines the contents and scope as well as a timetable for this evaluation. The institutions are to be consulted during this process. The evaluations must accord with international requirements.