About NOKUT
Vision

It is NOKUT’s ambition to be a quality assurance agency that is respected and highly regarded nationally and internationally. The agency will play its part in ensuring that the public has confidence in Norwegian higher education, vocational training and recognized foreign qualifications.
Introduction

NOKUT is responsible for:

- Quality assurance of Norwegian higher education and vocational (trade and technical) tertiary college education.
- General recognition of higher education obtained abroad.
- Information about Norwegian higher education abroad.

In performing its tasks, NOKUT has been made independent of the institutions and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. This means that the work is done in conformity with laws, regulations, and prescribed guidelines, which inform NOKUT’s decisions. The accreditation decisions taken by NOKUT cannot be overturned.
NOKUT’s quality assurance and quality control of higher education and vocational (trade and technical) tertiary college education involve the following elements:

**Evaluation and recognition of quality assurance systems**
Under the Norwegian Act relating to Universities and University Colleges, all accredited Norwegian universities and university colleges are required to operate a quality assurance system which promotes quality development and which can reveal possible weaknesses in the programmes of study offered. NOKUT is required to evaluate the respective quality systems at least every sixth year.

If an educational institution does not get its quality assurance system approved, it will then lose its institutional accreditation until further notice, thereby losing its right to offer new study programmes, unless these are individually accredited by NOKUT.

**Approval and accreditation of study programmes and institutions**
University colleges must be accredited before they have the right to establish a study programme without external approval. Norwegian universities, specialized university institutions and accredited university colleges are all accredited, but have different privileges as regards establishing programmes of study.

The following rules are in force:
- **The universities** can of their own accord establish and suspend a study programme at all levels in all fields and therefore do not need to apply to NOKUT for accreditation.
- **Specialized university institutions and accredited university colleges** can of their own accord accredit programmes up to bachelor degree level. They can also of their own accord accredit programmes at a higher level in the special fields for which they have doctoral degree accreditation.
- **University colleges without accreditation**, must apply for recognition and accreditation of all study programmes at all levels.

University colleges without accreditation can apply to NOKUT for institutional accreditation, thereby gaining the right to offer new study programmes. It is also possible for institutions which are already accredited to apply for accreditation at another level, thereby extending their right to offer study programmes without special accreditation. Educational institutions wishing to obtain institutional accreditation must have a recognized quality assurance system.

NOKUT can revise, and if necessary withdraw, an accreditation which has already been granted. An institution loses the right to provide teaching for any programme for which accreditation has been withdrawn.
All recognitions, accreditations and evaluations of Norwegian educational institutions which NOKUT carries out are open to public scrutiny, and NOKUT plays a part in making them known. This is so that universities, university colleges and vocational (trade and technical) tertiary colleges can benefit from each other’s experiences, and so that students and other interested parties can obtain information on the quality of study programmes offered.
Working methods

External expert consultants play a key role in NOKUT’s work. All decisions relating to Norwegian universities, university colleges and vocational (trade and technical) tertiary colleges are based on an evaluation carried out by an expert committee.

External expert consultants are appointed by NOKUT and put together in groups. The extent of the evaluation determines the size of the group. The expert group works under a mandate given by NOKUT, and its evaluations are made according to prescribed standards and criteria for the task in question.

Each expert consultant is expected to have relevant specialist expertise and knowledge regarding the level of the study programme under evaluation. There are also requirements that consultants should not have assignments at the institution or under the study programme they are evaluating and that they should not have any connection to the institution which would disqualify them.

NOKUT reaches a decision regarding accreditation or endorsement of quality systems based on the expert recommendation and the institution’s comments to the consultants’ report.

NOKUT does not use external experts for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications. General recognition is granted by NOKUT, which exchanges information about places and programmes of study with NOKUT’s counterpart organizations abroad. All decisions on recognition are retained in a database to ensure consistent processing when dealing with similar applications.

International cooperation

NOKUT works in accordance with internationally recognized methods. To ensure the further development of these methods and the means by which they are applied, NOKUT takes part in various international networks and bilateral projects of cooperation. International cooperation increases knowledge about the individual country’s educational systems and methods of quality assurance. This in turn increases mutual confidence between countries and provides a sound basis for reciprocal recognition of education.
Organization

NOKUT’s highest authority is a board comprising eight members, of whom one is a student. The Director of NOKUT is secretary to the board.

NOKUT has 45 employees, distributed among three sections and general staff (providing services to the three specialist sections as well as to management). The work of the sections is divided into three main areas of specialization:

• Section for Accreditation
• Section for Quality Systems
• International Recognitions Unit

The general staff in NOKUT (joint units under the Office of the Director) advise on legal matters, computer technology, statistics and information as well as providing administrative services.

Appeal Board

The Ministry of Education and Research has appointed an Appeal Board for NOKUT. This board has five members. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman are presiding judges.

NOKUT’s appeal board exclusively deals with complaints from an institution concerning the formal processes of dealing with an application. Complaints about the assessments made by expert committees are not admissible. An individual can also appeal against a decision made by NOKUT concerning recognition of his/her higher education. An individual must give grounds for his/her complaint.