# Guidelines: Requirements for degree-granting programmes of study

Please note that the Norwegian text is the official and authoritative text. This translation is for convenience only.

## Field of application

These guidelines apply for all new and existing degree-granting programmes of study on bachelor’s and master’s level.

## Purpose

These guidelines shall help ensure that these types of programmes of study at NMBU: maintain a high academic and pedagogical level, help NMBU fulfil its social mission and own strategic plans and goals, and fulfil all applicable Norwegian laws, regulations, and frameworks and NMBU's regulations.

## Contents

These guidelines include all requirements for these types of programmes of study at NMBU. The criteria are based on NOKUT's Academic Supervision Regulations, other national laws, and regulations, NMBU's education-related regulations and institutional requirements and guidelines found in strategies and plans.

Criteria 1-2 only apply to applications. No. 3-7 are overarching descriptions. No. 8-28 describe the basic (fundamental) prerequisites for the programme and the criteria for the programme description (PD) and study plan.[[1]](#footnote-2)

The PD must comply with national laws and regulations, NMBU regulations and the Norwegian Qualifications Framework (NQF). All programmes of study offered at NMBU must always be correctly described in *Felles studentsystem* (FS, a student information system). This is the basis for the description of NMBU’s programmes at <http://www.nmbu.no/studier> (Norwegian) and <http://www.nmbu.no/studies> (English).

**Please note!** These guidelines are used for control and evaluation of whether programmes fulfil the requirements. A checklist is enclosed for this purpose. The wording in these guidelines has been developed specifically with a view to preparing an application for the establishment of a new programme of this type and can be used as an application template.

## Usage

* Preparing an application for approval of a new programme of study
  + The application must include all the areas listed in this document. The requirements for each area are described below each heading. It is recommended to use these guidelines as an application template (remove the descriptions below the headings).
  + The PD is to be filled in in the separate template. **Please note!** In the PD, it shall not be argued whether the requirements have been met. The arguments for whether the PD is in line with the requirements must appear in the application.
  + The faculty assesses whether the criteria are fulfilled for all areas. If there are areas in need of further development and improvement, plans for this work shall be prepared. The application must describe these assessments and any plans for further development and improvements.
  + The experts review the application and assess whether the programme fulfils each requirement based on the faculty’s description in the application and the requirements in these guidelines.
* Annual control and review of existing programmes of study
  + The checklist in these guidelines shall be used.
* Review of programmes of study for periodic programme evaluation
  + It is recommended to use these guidelines and the checklist as a tool.

# Application for approval of a new programme of study {name of programme}

Faculty responsible:

## Introductory descriptions (for applications only)

### Short motivation for the application

* Fill in a short motivation for the application.

### Description of the process of development of the programme, quality assurance and council/faculty board processing

* Describe the procedures in the process of development of the programme, consideration in various committees/councils/boards and the persons, internal and external, involved in the development.
* External participation in the development of the programme is required for programmes to be approved. Give a short description of how external partners (experts, collaborators, the Council for Cooperation with Working Life) have been involved in the process.
* Also include the main conclusions from the expert assessment. The report is to be attached when the application is processed.

## Overarching descriptions

### Overarching programme description

* Fill in an overarching description of the programme, including the disciplinary area and overarching learning outcomes/goals.

### Strategic conformity and social mission, including a description of competences in interdisciplinarity and sustainability

* The relevance of the programme must correspond to NMBU's social mission and the University’s strategies and plans of action, including links to any research strategies. Describe this.
* Describe the programme’s position to similar programmes offered by other institutions.
* Explain the relationship between this programme of study and any other related programmes of study at NMBU.
* If relevant, describe how the programme differs from or is similar to other programmes at NMBU or at other institutions home and abroad.
* Describe how the programme contributes to competences in sustainability, interdisciplinary collaboration, and exploitation of synergies across programmes and faculties.

### Robust academic environment, capacity, academic management, and synergies

* Provide an overall assessment of the academic environment. The composition, size and total competences of the academic environment shall be fitted to and at the same time suffice to attend to the research and academic development that is carried out. This should be discussed more thoroughly under the assessment of the academic environment, point 28.
* Describe how the new programme can affect the capacity of other academic environments and faculties. This may include courses in the programme that are to be offered at other faculties.
* The programme of study must have clear academic management with a defined responsibility for quality assurance and development of the programme. Describe this.
* Indicate how the programme contributes to interdisciplinary collaboration and utilization of synergies across programmes and faculties.

### Student recruitment and market assessment

* The anticipated student recruitment must be sufficient to establish and maintain a satisfactory learning environment and stability in the programme. Assess this based on the scope and level of the programme.
* The faculty must make a realistic assessment of student recruitment and the market in the long term. Describe this.
* List the total number of students stipulated for the programme. The Ministry of Education and Research's requirement to have a minimum of 20 students for each programme of study for the creation of a new programme, must be used as a starting point.

### Cost estimate and funding

* Provide an overarching assessment of the funding and economic sustainability of the new programme.

## Basic (fundamental) prerequisites for the programme and the criteria for approval of the programme description and study plan

1. Name, degree, and title

* The programme shall have a name that covers/describes its contents, scope, and level.
* The name of the degree and any title shall be correctly listed in the PD in line with the Regulations concerning Degrees and Vocational Training, Protected Titles and Nominal Lengths of Study at Universities and University Colleges ([text in Norwegian](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2005-12-16-1574)) and Academic Regulations for NMBU ([text in Norwegian](https://www.nmbu.no/studenter/forskrifter-og-retningslinjer) and [English translation](https://www.nmbu.no/en/students/regulations-and-guidelines)).
* If there may be doubt about the appropriateness of the name, the name choice should be explained.
* In the PD, the programme’s name and title must be listed in Norwegian *Nynorsk* and *Bokmål*, and English.

### Relevance

* The relevance of the programme for the labour market, further studies and society in general shall be clearly described the PD. The relevance of the programme shall correspond to NMBU's social mission and strategic plans.
* The faculties are encouraged to ensure that there is a link between the PD text about "relevance" and NMBU's social mission and strategies.

### Admission

* The admission requirements for the programme of study shall be clearly described in the PD and be in line with the regulations. Requirements in Regulations concerning Admission to Higher Education ([text in Norwegian](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2017-01-06-13)) apply for education that does not require other higher education for admission. Admission requirements are also listed in Regulations concerning Requirements for Master’s Degrees ([text in Norwegian](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2005-12-01-1392)) and in Academic Regulations for NMBU ([text in Norwegian](https://www.nmbu.no/studenter/forskrifter-og-retningslinjer) and [English translation](https://www.nmbu.no/en/students/regulations-and-guidelines)). Comment on this.

### Descriptors

* The learning outcomes students shall have achieved on completing the programme shall be described in accordance with the [NQF](https://www.nokut.no/en/norwegian-education/the-norwegian-qualifications-framework-for-lifelong-learning/) and in terms of knowledge, skills and general competency. Some of NOKUT’s resources on the NQF: description of learning outcomes for the levels in the NQR ([in Norwegian](https://www.nokut.no/norsk-utdanning/nasjonalt-kvalifikasjonsrammeverk-for-livslang-laring/nivaa-i-kvalifikasjonsrammeverket/) and [English](https://www.nokut.no/en/norwegian-education/the-norwegian-qualifications-framework-for-lifelong-learning/beskrivelser-av-laringsutbytte-for-nivaene-i-nkr/)) and more information on the NQF ([in Norwegian](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/kompetanse/nkr2011mvedlegg.pdf)). You are welcome to contact the Learning Centre for support when developing descriptors.
* The PD must comply with national laws and regulations, NMBU regulations and the NQF. All programmes of study offered at NMBU must always be correctly described in *Felles studentsystem* (FS, a student information system). This is the basis for the description of NMBU’s programmes at [www.nmbu.no/studier](http://www.nmbu.no/studier) (Norwegian) and [www.nmbu.no/en/studies](http://www.nmbu.no/en/studies) (English).
* The PD shall provide a clear description of learning outcomes students in the programme are expected to obtain. The plan shall be for all students to gain all learning outcomes on completing the programme.
* The faculty must assess whether the PD's description of learning outcomes is in accordance with the NQF.

### Learning activities

* The PD shall describe the learning activities and working methods for the programme as a whole.
* The learning activities shall be suitable to achieve the learning outcomes described in the PD. They should facilitate the student's active role in the learning process and must be in accordance with [NMBU’s learning philosophy.](https://www.nmbu.no/en/about/nmbu-learning-philosophy)
* The faculty must assess how well suited the learning activities are to achieving the learning outcomes for the programme.

### Forms of assessment. Assessment of student learning

### The PD shall describe the type and scope of examination and assessment used in the programme.

### The forms of assessment shall be suited to assess the degree to which the student has achieved the learning outcomes.

### The faculty assesses how suitable the examination and assessment forms are to assessing student achievement of the learning outcomes for the programme.

### Contents, programme structure, and progression

* The content and structure of the programme shall be satisfactorily described in the PD, in accordance with the requirements in the Academic Supervision Regulations ([text in Norwegian).](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2017-02-07-137) The PD's description of the contents and structure of the programme shall include all relevant sections of the PD’s template (see template for the complete list) and clearly describe all academic requirements for achieving the degree.
* The study plan must list an overview of courses in the programme of study, which courses are compulsory and optional, progression and any progression requirements. Any programme options (profiles) and requirements for specializations must be described.
* The contents and structure of the programme shall be adequately related to the learning outcomes, as described in the PD. The faculty must assess whether the description of contents and structure relates to the learning outcomes students are to gain. A more detailed assessment shall confirm that individual courses, and especially compulsory courses, correspond to and support the PD. It shall be possible to "trace" learning outcomes, learning activities and forms of assessment back to the courses.

### Scope of work

* The scope of the work is expected to be 1,500 hours a year, and is divided into adapted forms of teaching, independent study, and examination preparations. Confirm that a nominal full-time programme is 60 credits and 1,500 hours of work a year.
* Based on the course composition the faculty has chosen for the programme, the faculty creates a rough estimate of the percentage of student work hours that are "adapted" (i.e. contact with an academic who is present) in each year of study.

### Bachelor’s and five-year master’s – Examen philosophicum

* In the bachelor's degree and the five-year master's degree, 10 credits shall be connected to an introductory course that includes *examen philosophicum (ex. phil).* The PD shall describe this requirement. Comment on this.

### Bachelor’s – Specialisation

* The 180 credits in the bachelor's programme shall include a specialisation of at least 80 credits. For bachelor's degrees, the PD shall describe the requirements for this specialisation and how the specialisation requirement can be fulfilled. Comment on this.

### Two-year master’s – Academic requirements on which the programme is based

* The PD of two-year master's degrees shall stipulate the academic requirements on which the master's degree is based (the disciplines, courses or groups of courses included in the educational programme on which the master's degree is based) and these must comply with the Academic Regulations for NMBU ([text in Norwegian](https://www.nmbu.no/studenter/forskrifter-og-retningslinjer) and [English translation](https://www.nmbu.no/en/students/regulations-and-guidelines)). Comment on this.

### Two- and five-year master’s – Independent work

* Two and five-year master's degrees shall include independent work of a scope of at least 30 and at most 60 credits (Section 6 of the Regulations concerning Requirements for Master’s Degrees ([text in Norwegian](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2005-12-01-1392)). The PD for these degrees shall include the requirement regarding independent work. Comment on this.

### Experience-based master’s – Relevant work experience

* For an experience-based master’s degree, the PD must stipulate what work experience is relevant, that at least two years of work experience is required, and whether work experience of more than two years is required. Comment on this.

### Supervised professional training and internship (if relevant)

* For programmes with supervised professional training, supervisors, if any, must have adequate experience from the area of practice, and there must be satisfactory agreements regulating significant issues of importance for students. Comment on this.
* A programme of study may include internship. In such cases, there must be satisfactory templates for agreements regulating significant issues of importance for students. Comment on this.

### Link to R&D

* The programme must have a satisfactory link to R&D, assessed in relation to the programme's level, scope and character. Describe research activities and development work in the academic environment associated with the programme, and the ways in which these are integrated into the programme.

### Support functions and infrastructure

* The premises, library services, student guidance and other administrative and technical services, access to ICT resources and working conditions for students shall be adapted to the number of students and the programme as described in the PD. The list is not exhaustive. The support functions and infrastructure shall be adequate for students to be able to achieve the learning outcomes described for the programme. The faculty must consider which demands for increased capacity when it comes to learning areas or other infrastructure, that the new programme necessitate.
* The faculty considers how to facilitate support and the promotion of student’s physical and psychosocial learning environment locally. This includes academic supervision, systems for mentoring, physical/digital meeting places etc.

### Suitability assessment (if applicable)

* Any suitability assessment must be made in compliance with the Regulations Relating to the University and University Colleges Act ([text in Norwegian](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2024-06-28-1392/)) and the Academic Regulations for NMBU ([text in Norwegian](https://www.nmbu.no/studenter/forskrifter-og-retningslinjer) and [English translation](https://www.nmbu.no/en/students/regulations-and-guidelines)). This only applies to programmes that are to include suitability assessments pursuant to Section 12-3 of the University and University Colleges Act ([text in Norwegian](https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2024-03-08-9)). Comment on this.
* The PD shall discuss suitability assessments and how these are done.

### National curriculum (if applicable)

* Some educations are subject to [National Curriculum Regulations laid down by the Ministry of Education and Research](https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/utdanning/hoyere-utdanning/rammeplaner/id435163/) (text in Norwegian). Requirements in current regulations shall be met when relevant. The programme shall comply with the national curriculum and national curriculum for the programme shall be discussed in the PD. Confirm this if applicable.
* When relevant, it is recommended that advisory national plans for a degree are followed (see information on advisory plans under the relevant disciplinary strategic unit on [Universities Norway’s website](https://www.uhr.no/strategiske-enheter/fagstrategiske-enheter/) (text in Norwegian)). Comment on this if applicable.

### Agreements

* Satisfactory agreements that regulate significant aspects that are important to students shall be available when parts of the programme take place outside of NMBU. Comment on this.
* When organising student exchange in the programme, preliminary approval is required for all programmes based on NMBU’s procedures for student exchange agreements. Comment on this.
* If compulsory parts of the programme are taken outside of NMBU, the faculty shall confirm that there are agreements covering the teaching collaboration.
* For more information on internationalisation/exchange, see point 27.

### Schemes for internationalisation, including student exchange

* The programme shall have arrangements for internationalisation and agreements for student exchange relevant to the scope, level, and character of the programme.
* Give an account of internationalisation in the programme, for instance, clarify how challenges of internationalisation and globalisation are addressed as part of the programme (i.e. use of international guest researchers, curriculum developed with international partners, use of languages other than Norwegian etc.) and how the programme has an international curriculum that gives international and intercultural knowledge and abilities that prepare the students to perform in an international and multicultural context.
* All programmes leading to a degree must have arrangements for international student exchange, where the content of the exchange is professionally relevant. The faculty assesses if these requirements are fulfilled.
* The PD shall describe arrangements for student exchange related to the programme and note appropriate/recommended schemes.
* You may clarify how many students are expected to go on exchange and how many international students are expected in parts of or in the entire programme and how this will contribute to increase the internationalisation throughout the programme.
* The programme's international contents are described in the PD sections on learning outcomes and/or contents, structure, and progression. The faculty assesses this.

### Academic environment affiliated with the programme of study

* The requirements for the academic environment are listed in the Academic Supervision Regulations ([text in Norwegian](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2017-02-07-137)) and Regulations concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education ([text in Norwegian](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2010-02-01-96)). The faculty must give a good description of the academic environment and justify its assessments of the academic environment in accordance with the requirements below:
  + The composition, size and overall competency of the academic environment shall be adapted to the programme as described in the PD (including the study plan). The academic environment should cover subjects and courses of which the programme consists.
  + The programme shall have a broad and stable academic community consisting of a sufficient number of employees with high academic competence in education, research, and professional development within the field of study.
  + At least 50 per cent of FTEs related to the programme shall be academics in primary positions at NMBU. Of these, there must be persons with competence at least at the level of Associate Professor in the central parts of the programme.  
    In addition:
    - For bachelor’s programmes: at least 20% of the academic community must be at the level of Associate Professor or higher.
    - For master’s programmes:
      * minimum 50% at the level of Associate Professor or higher
      * minimum 10% of this 50% must be at the level of Professor or Docent
  + The "central aspects" of the programme must be covered by persons with primary positions at NMBU. Confirm this. If there is doubt about that at least 50 per cent of FTEs related to the central aspects of the programme being covered by staff in primary positions at NMBU, the situation must be described.
  + The academic environment should be able to demonstrate proven results with a quality and an extent that is satisfactory for the content and level of the programme.
  + The size of the academic environment must be in proportion to the number of students and the programme’s distinctiveness.
  + The academic environment must be stable over time in terms of competence and have relevant educational competence.
  + The academic environment shall participate actively in national and international collaborations and networks relevant to the programme.
  + Any supervisors of professional training must have appropriate practical experience in the field. Competency requirements for supervisors of practical training must be described and the faculty must confirm that the competency requirements ensure that the supervisors have the appropriate experience.

# Conclusion

* An application for approval of a new programme of study shall end by a conclusion. The conclusion is based on the quality assurance and the assessments made above and includes the faculty’s recommendation of approval of the programme.

Date approved at the faculty:

Signature:

# Checklist

All criteria in the checklist must be fulfilled for a programme of study to be approved.   
There is a description of the criteria on pages 2-7.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **The faculty’s comments, if any** | **Are the criteria met?  Yes/No/Uncertain/ Does not apply** |
| **For applications only:** |  |  |
| 1. Short motivation for the application |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Description of the process of development of the programme, quality assurance and council/faculty board processing |  | Choose an item |
| **For applications and evaluations:** |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Overarching programme description |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Strategic conformity and social mission, including a description of competences in interdisciplinarity and sustainability |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Robust academic environment, capacity, academic management, and synergies |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Student recruitment and market assessment |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Cost estimate and funding |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Name, degree, and title |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Relevance |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Admission |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Descriptors |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Learning activities |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Forms of assessment. Assessment of student learning |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Contents, programme structure, and progression |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Scope of work |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Bachelor’s and five-year master’s – Examen philosophicum |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Bachelor’s - Specialisation |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Two-year master’s – Academic requirements on which the programme is based |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Two- and five-year master’s – Independent work |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Experience-based master’s – Relevant work experience |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Supervised professional training and internship (if relevant) |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Link to R&D |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Support functions and infrastructure |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Suitability assessment (if applicable) |  | Choose an item |
| 1. National curriculum (if applicable) |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Agreements |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Schemes for internationalisation, including student exchange |  | Choose an item |
| 1. Academic environment affiliated with the programme of study |  | Choose an item |

1. When applying for a new programme of study, the “programme description” (PD) is a written description of the programme of study following NMBU’s template for programme descriptions. When reviewing and evaluating existing programmes, the “PD” is the written description of the programme that is registered in FS and online. The “study plan” is a part of the “PD” and is here understood as a table with an overview of the courses in the programme of study, compulsory and optional courses, progression and any progression requirements, and any programme options (profiles) and requirements for specializations. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)