Nmbu

Updated DECEMBER 2022

Guidelines. Requirements for degree-granting programmes of study at NMBU

DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS,

Please note! The Norwegian text is the official and authoritative text. The translation is for convenience only.

NMBU's programmes of study shall maintain a high academic and pedagogical level and help NMBU fulfil its social mission and its own strategic plans and goals. The programme shall fulfil all applicable Norwegian laws, regulations and frameworks and NMBU's regulations.

**About the use of these guidelines:**

The requirements for degree-granting programmes of study apply to all degree-granting programmes at NMBU. Both new and existing studies. 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.

1. Application for approval of new programme of study:  
   The application for approval of a new degree granting programme of study must include an evaluation of all the areas listed in this document. The requirements for each area are described below each heading.  
   The faculty assess 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 in these guidelines based on the faculty’s description in the application and the requirements in these guidelines.
2. Annual control and review of existing programmes of study:  
   At the annual control of whether the programmes meet the requirements, the checklist in these guidelines (page 3) shall be used.
3. Programme evaluation:  
   These guidelines should also be used as a tool during the periodic programme evaluation.

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# Checklist

**All criteria in the checklist must be fulfilled for a programme to be approved. There is a description of the criteria from page 4.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **The faculty’s comments, if any** | **Are the criteria met?  Yes/No/ Uncertain/ Does not apply** |
| 1. Overarching programme description |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Strategic conformity and social mission, including a description of competencies in interdisciplinarity and sustainability |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Description of the process of development of the programme, quality assurance and council/faculty board processing |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Cost estimate and funding |  | 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. Name of the programme, degree and title |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. National curriculum |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Suitability assessment |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Scope of work |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Agreements |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Admission |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Examen philosophicum |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Bachelor’s – Specialisation |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Two-year master’s - Academic require-ments 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 |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Link to R&D |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Support functions and infrastructure |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Academic environment affiliated with the programme of study |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Descriptor of learning outcomes |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Contents, programme structure and progression |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Learning and teaching methods |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Examination and assessment |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Relevance |  | Choose an item. |
| 1. Schemes for student exchange and internationalisation |  | Choose an item. |

# Specification of the criteria

Criteria 1-6 are overarching descriptions, whereas criteria 7-27 describe the basic (fundamental) prerequisites for the programme and the criteria for approval of the programme description and study plan.[[1]](#footnote-2) Areas where the faculty sees a need for improvement and development should be pointed out, with a description of the work planned for the times ahead.

The program description (PD) is completed in the "Template for description of programmes of study" when applying for the approval of a new programme of study. It is important to note that one should not list any arguments in the PD on whether the criteria are met. The arguments for whether the PD is in accordance with the requirements must appear in the application, which is based on this document.

The PD must comply with national laws and regulations, NMBU regulations and must be in line with 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).

## Overarching programme description

An application for establishment of a new programme of study must include a short motivation for the application and an overarching description of the programme, including the disciplinary area and overarching learning outcomes/goals.

## Strategic conformity and social mission, including a description of competencies 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 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. Describe how the programme differs from or is similar to other programmes at NMBU or at other institutions home and abroad. In addition, a description of how the programme contributes to competencies in sustainability, interdisciplinary collaboration, and exploitation of synergies across programmes and faculties must be included.

## 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, Council for Cooperation with Working Life) have been involved in the process.

Also include the main conclusions from the expert assessment here. The report is to be attached when the application is processed.

## Cost estimate and funding

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

## 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 21.

In addition to describing the academic capacity, provide a description of 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.

Indicate also 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. The total number of students stipulated for the programme must also be listed here. 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.

## 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 and Academic regulations for NMBU. If there may be doubt about the appropriateness of the name, the name choice should be explained.

The PD gives the programme name in Norwegian Nynorsk, Norwegian Bokmål and English.

## National curriculum

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/). Requirements in current regulations shall be met when relevant. The PD shall comply with the national curriculum and national curriculum for the programme shall be discussed in the PD. 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/)).

## Suitability assessment

Any suitability assessment must be made in compliance with the [Regulations relating to suitability assessment in higher education](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2006-06-30-859) and the Academic regulations for NMBU. This only applies to programmes that are to include suitability assessments pursuant to section 4-10 of the University and University Colleges Act. The PD shall discuss suitability assessments and how these are done.

## 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.

## 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. Preliminary approval is required for all programmes based on NMBU’s procedures for student exchange agreements. If compulsory parts of the programme are taken outside of NMBU, the faculty shall also confirm that there are agreements covering the teaching collaboration. Internationalisation/exchange, see point 27.

## 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 *([Forskrift om opptak til høyere utdanning](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 (*[Forskrift om krav til mastergrad](https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2005-12-01-1392) - Mastergradsforskriften*) and in Academic regulations for NMBU.

## 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.

## Bachelor’s – Specialisation

The 180 credits in the bachelor's degree programme shall include a specialisation of at least 80 credits. The PD (bachelor's) shall describe the requirement for an 80-credit specialisation and how the specialisation requirement can be fulfilled.

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

The PD (two-year master's) 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.

## 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 (Regulations concerning Requirements for Master’s Degrees, section 6). The PD for the two-year and five-year master's degrees shall include the requirement regarding independent work.

## Experience-based master's - Relevant work experience

In a master’s programme based on previous professional experience, the programme description must stipulate what work experience is relevant, that at least two years of work experience is required, and whether work experience of more than three years is required.

For experience-based master's degrees, the PD shall describe requirements regarding the length and type of relevant work experience.

## Supervised professional training

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.

## 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 also 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 meeting places etc.

## Academic environment affiliated with the programme of study

The requirements for the academic environment are listed in the [Academic Supervision Regulations](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](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 study 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 professional 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:
  + Bachelor’s programmes: at least 20% at the level of Associate Professor or higher.
  + 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 higher

* The faculty shall confirm that the "central aspects" of the programme are covered by persons with primary positions at NMBU. 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 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.

## Descriptor of learning outcomes

The learning outcomes students shall have achieved on completing the programme shall be described in accordance with the [National Qualifications Framework (NQF)](https://www.nokut.no/norsk-utdanning/nasjonalt-kvalifikasjonsrammeverk-for-livslang-laring) and in terms of knowledge, skills and general competency. Information in Norwegian on how to describe [expected learning outcome](https://www.nmbu.no/ansatt/laringssenteret/kurs-og-kompetanse/lub) is available on the Learning Centre’s website. You are welcome to contact the Centre for support when developing descriptors.

The PD must comply with national laws and regulations, NMBU regulations and must be in line with the National 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 [www.nmbu.no/studier](http://www.nmbu.no/studier) (Norwegian) and [www.nmbu.no/studies](https://eduumb.sharepoint.com/sites/team_ksuteamet/Shared%20Documents/General/KSU%20revisjon%20system%20rutiner/Revidering%20KSU%20-%202022/Rutine%20for%20godkjenning%20av%20program/www.nmbu.no/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.

## Contents, programme structure and progression

The content and structure of the programme shall be satisfactorily described in the programme description, in accordance with the requirements in the Academic Supervision Regulations. 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 should list an overview of courses in the programme of study, and which courses are compulsory and optional. It should also show the 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 programme description. 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 should be possible to "trace" learning outcomes, learning activities and forms of assessment back to the courses.

## Learning and teaching methods

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/ansatt/laringssenteret/aktuelt/node/45281) The faculty must assess how well suited the learning activities are to achieving the learning outcomes for the programme.

## Examination and assessment

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. There is an [overview of some different forms of assessment](https://www.nmbu.no/ansatt/laringssenteret/verktoy/u-verktoy/node/43946)  in Norwegian on the Learning Centre’s website.

## 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.

## Schemes for student exchange and internationalisation

The programme shall have agreements for student exchange and arrangements for internationalisation relevant to the scope, level, and character of the programme. All programmes leading to a degree should have arrangements for international student exchange, where the content of the exchange is professionally relevant. The faculty assesses if these requirements are fulfilled.

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. You may also 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 PD shall describe arrangements for student exchange related to the programme and note appropriate/recommended schemes. The programme's international contents are described in the PD sections on learning outcomes and/or contents and structure. The faculty assesses this.

# 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.

1. The “programme description” is here understood as a written description of the programme of study that follows NMBU’s template for programme descriptions. The “study plan” is a part of the “programme description” 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)