# Joint evaluations of research and education

## A pilot study of the interplay between research and education in political science, sociology and economics in Norway

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The Research Council of Norway

NOKUT

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# Forword

In September 2014, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research commissioned the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) and the Research Council of Norway (RCN) to develop a model for joint evaluations of research and education in Norway. NOKUT and the RCN took the opportunity of RCN's planned evaluation of Norwegian social science research to test a model as a pilot project. This resulted in three overlapping sets of evaluations of social sciences in Norway: a research evaluation, a pilot education evaluation, and a pilot project assessing the interplay between research and education. Together, they form the project *joint evaluations of research and education*.

The project indicates a shift in perception regarding research and education as interlinked activities, and signals an increasing curiosity about how these activities influence each other. In separate, but synchronized processes, NOKUT and the RCN have evaluated the quality of research (SAMEVAL) and education (KOMBEVAL) in political science, sociology and economics in a number of Norwegian higher education institutions. The interplay evaluation takes this a step further, and addresses the relationship between research quality and educational quality at the institutional level within each discipline. In total 10 institutions and 58 study programmes are included in the interplay evaluation.

The model for the interplay evaluation was developed jointly by NOKUT and the RCN. For that purpose, NOKUT and the RCN commissioned the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU) to write a literature review on the interplay between research and education, with the aim of developing a set of interplay indicators to be used in the evaluation. The review was published as the report 'The Relationship between Research and Education: typologies and indicators' in 2016 (Elken & Wollscheid 2016).

In line with NOKUT and RCN's commitment to peer review in external quality assurance and quality enhancement, the interplay evaluation was assigned to a group of international experts forming three disciplinary panels for political science, sociology and economics. Each panel was composed of one member from the relevant disciplinary panel in the education evaluation, and one from the corresponding panel in the research evaluation. The international experts recruited to take part as panel members are active researchers and have longstanding teaching experience at the university level. Most also have experience in educational leadership.

The purpose of the interplay evaluation is to develop and test a model for how to evaluate the relationship between research and education, to learn more about how research and education interact in the social sciences, and to learn about how this interaction affects the quality of research and education in this area. To this end, the experts were asked to assess the level and forms of interplay at each participating institution and for each discipline, and, as far as possible, to comment on the relationship between interplay and educational and research quality.

NOKUT and the Research Council of Norway would like to thank the participating institutions and the experts for their contributions to this novel project.

# Contents

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 *The mandate, aim and objectives of the interplay evaluation*

In September 2014, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research commissioned the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) and the Research Council of Norway (RCN) to develop a model for joint evaluations of research and education in Norway. NOKUT and the RCN took the opportunity of RCN's planned evaluation of Norwegian social science research to test a model as a pilot project. This resulted in three overlapping sets of evaluations of social sciences in Norway: a research evaluation, a pilot education evaluation, and a pilot project evaluating the interplay between research and education. Together, they form the project *joint evaluations of research and education.*

The project indicates a shift in perception regarding research and education as interlinked activities, and signals an increasing curiosity about how these activities influence each other. In separate, but synchronized processes, NOKUT and the RCN have evaluated the quality of research (SAMEVAL) and education (KOMBEVAL) in political science, sociology and economics in a number of Norwegian higher education institutions (cf. 1.4.1 Participating institutions and study programmes). The interplay evaluation takes this a step further, and addresses the relationship between research quality and educational quality at the institutional level within each discipline.

We know from ongoing research that the relationship between research and education in higher education is complex and multidimensional. A recent report from the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU) concludes that 'the relationship between research and education in higher education appears to be dependent on a variety of factors including program level, discipline and the underlying definitions used (i.e. broad vs. narrow conception of research)' (Elken & Wollscheid 2016: 8). The interplay evaluation aims to explore how this relationship plays out in practice.

## 1.2 *Interplay evaluation model*

The model for the interplay evaluation was developed jointly by NOKUT and the RCN. For that purpose, NOKUT and the RCN commissioned NIFU to write a literature review on the interplay between research and education, with the aim of developing a set of interplay indicators to be used in the evaluation. The review was published as the report 'The Relationship between Research and Education: typologies and indicators' in 2016 (Elken & Wollscheid 2016). Key findings from the report are presented in more detail in the next chapter (cf. Chapter 2).

In line with NOKUT and the RCN's commitment to peer review in external quality assurance and quality enhancement, the interplay evaluation was assigned to a group of international experts forming three disciplinary panels for political science, sociology and economics. Each panel was composed of one member from the relevant disciplinary panel in the education evaluation, and one from the corresponding panel in the research evaluation. The international experts recruited to take part as panel

members are active researchers and have longstanding teaching experience at the university level. Most also have experience in educational leadership.

The purpose of the interplay evaluation is to develop and test a model for how to evaluate the relationship between research and education, to learn more about how research and education interact in the social sciences, and to learn about how this interaction affects the quality of research and education in this area. To this end, the experts were asked to assess the level and forms of interplay at each participating institution and for each discipline, and, as far as possible, to comment on the relationship between interplay and educational and research quality. To do so, the experts followed the four-step evaluation model described below.

### 1.2.1 A four-step evaluation model

The interplay evaluation consisted of four steps. Firstly, the experts compared the results of the evaluation of quality in research and the evaluation of quality in education at each participating institution and for each discipline, based on the research and education evaluation reports. Secondly, the experts assessed each participating institution and study programme within their discipline based on five interplay dimensions (c.f. 1.2.2). Thirdly, the experts used the results of the previous two steps to comment on the relationship between research quality, educational quality, and degrees of interplay (high, medium, low or absent) at each institution within their discipline. They were also asked to note whether the evidence suggested that degrees of interplay, or particular interplay dimensions, could have particular effects on research or educational quality. Fourthly, each disciplinary panel compiled the results from the three previous steps with the aim of identifying patterns across their discipline.

### 1.2.2 Interplay dimensions

Drawing on the NIFU literature review and on the expertise of a reference group composed of representatives from the Norwegian higher education sector, NOKUT and the RCN developed a set of five dimensions that we believe to create synergies between research and education:

1. Organizational conditions
2. Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education
3. Research-based curriculum/Learning research methodology
4. Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment
5. Involvement in staff research

These dimensions differ slightly from those identified in ‘The Relationship between Research and Education: typologies and indicators’ (Elken & Wollscheid 2016), and that are elaborated on in chapter 2 of this report. The primary change is that indicators covering similar themes and evaluated with the same evidence base have been combined, rather than being treated separately.

Table 1 presents the different dimensions, and shows how the evaluation made use of them. **Supplement 1** (Survey Form) shows the relationship between these interplay dimensions, the questions the evaluation aimed to answer, and the evidence used to answer each question.

**Table 1: Interplay dimensions**

| Interplay dimension | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Organizational conditions** | This indicator addresses the institutional conditions and incentives that facilitate or weaken the link between education and research. In particular, this concerns the extent to which there are explicit and direct incentives for emphasizing research and/or education, and whether these incentives are balanced. For instance, if there are strong institutional incentives for increasing quality of research, whereas no such incentives exist for excellent teaching, this can create an unbalanced emphasis among staff.<br><br>The interplay evaluation asks the following question on organizational conditions:<br>• To what extent are academic staff encouraged and enabled to prioritize and improve their teaching? |
| **Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education** | This indicator addresses how what the research staff members do relates to the education they provide: how far staff members who teach are also actively engaged in research, and to what extent their teaching and research interests are aligned. In line with the NIFU literature review, this indicator is not limited to the question of whether researchers directly use their own research in the classroom; rather, it is intended to take into account that staff who engage in research and development can productively use cutting-edge research in teaching in a variety of ways.<br><br>The interplay evaluation asks the following questions on academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education:<br>• To what extent are staff members who teach also active researchers?<br>• To what extent is teaching connected to research being done at the institution? |
| **Research-based curriculum/Learning research methodology** | This dimension addresses the extent to which study programmes are designed to ensure that students gain the necessary skills to engage with research and research-based education. Among other aspects, it covers the scope and placement of research methodology and research skills education in study programmes.<br><br>The interplay evaluation asks the following question on research-based curriculum and learning research methodology:<br>• To what extent are the study programmes aimed at developing students' research abilities? (This includes the scope and placement of both the bachelor and master theses and the methods courses.) |
| **Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment** | Where the previous dimension addressed how research skills education is organized in study programmes, this dimension addresses research orientation in teaching and assessment more broadly. The dimension reflects how far teaching, learning and assessment methods used are likely to help students develop a wide range of research-related abilities. While this will often entail the use of inquiry-based learning, other forms of learning and assessment methods can also contribute to this result.<br><br>The interplay evaluation asks the following question on research orientation in teaching methods and assessment:<br>• Are teaching and assessment methods aimed at developing students' research abilities? (This may include their ability to apply academic knowledge, reflect on their own practice, find and evaluate scholarly information, and pursue their own investigations.) |
| **Involvement in staff research** | This dimension addresses how far students at different levels take part in the research of staff members, beyond the standard supervision of BA and MA theses. NIFU's literature review suggests that this dimension is most likely to |

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| | be relevant at MA level and above, but the evaluation also sees student involvement in staff research at lower levels as a meaningful, if ambitious indicator of a strong research-education link.<br><br>The interplay evaluation asks the following question on involvement in staff research:<br>• To what extent are students involved in staff research beyond the thesis supervision process, for instance in research groups? |

## 1.3 *Data and tools*

### 1.3.1 Data

NOKUT and the RCN have compiled data relevant for assessing the interplay between research and education as follows:

- The research panel reports and the education panel reports
- Overview of courses and affiliated lecturers for each study programme
- Overview of study programmes affiliated with research groups
- The institutions' self-assessments for research and education
- Study programme plans and structure for all study programmes
- Course descriptions for methods courses and BA/MA theses
- Data from NOKUT's annual student survey (*Studiebarometeret*)

#### The research panel reports and the education panel reports

The research panel reports are the product of RCN's research evaluation of the social sciences (SAMEVAL). SAMEVAL included six disciplines: geography, economics, political science, sociology, social anthropology and economic-administrative research. All disciplines have undergone research evaluations by the RCN previously, except economic-administrative research. It is the first time that different disciplines have been evaluated together. The main objective of the evaluation was to review the overall state-of-the-art of research in the social sciences in Norway, focusing primarily on the situation in universities, university colleges and relevant research institutes. The evaluation also took into consideration the societal impact of the research performed and the interplay of research and education. The aim is to provide insight, advice and recommendations for the institutions evaluated that can be used to enhance their own research standards, expand the knowledge base used to develop funding instruments in the Research Council and to provide input on research policy to the Norwegian government.

The SAMEVAL panels evaluated research groups, the research area within each institution and the national research area. The panels used the following scale as the basis for their scoring of research quality:

| ***Scale*** | ***Criteria*** |
|---|---|
| **5 Excellent** | Original research at the international forefront. The unit has a very high productivity. The unit [the institution /research group] undertakes excellent, original research, and publishes it in outstanding international channels for scientific and scholarly publications. Its researchers present ongoing research regularly at recognised, international scientific conferences. |

| | |
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| **4 Very good** | Research with a high degree of originality, and a scientific profile with a high degree of publications in high quality channels for scientific and scholarly publications. The unit has a high productivity. The researchers participate habitually at international scientific conferences. The research is decisively very relevant to the knowledge production in the field internationally. |
| **3 Good** | Research of a good international standard. The unit has an acceptable productivity, and contributes to the development within its field. The researchers participate at scientific conferences. |
| **2 Fair** | Research of an acceptable, but moderate standard. The productivity at the unit is modest, and with few original contributions to the field internationally. |
| **1 Weak** | Research of insufficient quality and with a meagre scientific publication profile. The productivity is low. |

The educational panel reports are the product of NOKUT's education evaluation of the social sciences (KOMBEVAL), a pilot project conducted in a separate but synchronized process with RCN's SAMEVAL. One of its aims has been to test out a new model for independently exploring and evaluating central aspects of educational quality in Norwegian higher education. The evaluation also aimed to improve the public's, institutions', and the government's knowledge of the current state of social sciences education in Norway, and to give the institutions that took part individual feedback from experts in the field in order to enhance their educations further. More broadly, by attending to the current state of social sciences education, the issue of what helps and hinders it, and the question of how to improve it further, the evaluation aims to contribute to making educational quality a high priority in Norwegian higher education.

The KOMBEVAL panels evaluated the educational quality at each institution. The experts were provided with a grading scale intending to ensure a similar starting point for evaluating each quality dimension and the overall quality of education within one discipline for each participating institution. However, the numeric grades were not reproduced in the education reports.

The interplay evaluation starts where the research and education evaluations conclude and, as a first step, compares the results between the two, in the disciplines political science, sociology and economics. It is important to note that the two units of comparison are not necessarily inhibiting a perfect fit. The research panels have assessed the research area at the institutions, whereas the education evaluation have assessed the quality of education at institutes/departments. This means that research included in the evaluation may well have been produced by researchers outside the departments offering the study programme. In addition, relevant study programmes might not have been included in the education evaluation since participation was voluntary and a number of multidisciplinary programmes have been left out. This represents a limitation in our evaluation model, and indicates that the results generated should be read with caution.

### Overview of courses and affiliated lecturers for each study programme

NOKUT provided the disciplinary panels with an overview, in the form of an excel worksheet, of the courses offered and corresponding course leader(s) for each programme at each institution.

### Overview of study programmes affiliated with research groups

In the institutions' self-assessments for research the institutions were asked to indicate the linkages between research and the study programmes offered. They filled out an excel file to indicate the study programmes based on the teaching activities of the researchers to be evaluated.

### The institutions' self-assessments for research and education

The institutions' self-assessments for research (**Supplement 2**) and for education (**Supplement 3**) provided important information for 4 out of the 5 interplay dimensions (i.e. organizational conditions, academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education, research orientation in teaching methods and assessment, and involvement in staff research).

### Study programme plans and structure for all study programmes

NOKUT provided screenshots of the institutions' webpages containing descriptions of the participating study programmes, their programme plans and structure.

### Course descriptions for methods courses and BA/MA theses

NOKUT provided screenshots of the institutions' webpages containing course descriptions for the methods courses as well as courses offered in relation to the BA and MA theses.

### Data from NOKUT's annual student survey (Studiebarometeret)

NOKUT's annual survey provides information on how students perceive the quality of the study programme they attend. The data are divided between bachelor and master levels. The survey is distributed annually to second-year bachelor students, to second-year master students, and to fifth-year students in integrated master's degree programmes. The survey includes questions on various aspects of their study programmes. Students rate the quality of these aspects on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest level of satisfaction and 1 the lowest. In addition, students are asked to report the weekly hours they spend on learning activities organized by the institution, and on individual studies.[1]

Aggregated results from the 2014-2016 NOKUT student survey (Studiebarometeret) were made available to the disciplinary panels. They covered the following questions about 'teaching and assessment methods':

- To what degree are these teaching and learning methods used in your programme?
    - Lecture
    - Seminar
    - Written assignment
    - Group work without teacher
    - Project work
    - Digital (electronic) work methods
- To what extent do you find that examinations and other written assignments so far have:
    - Concerned central parts of the curriculum
    - Required understanding and reasoning
    - Stimulated reflection and critical thinking

## 1.3.2 Assessment tools

The experts were provided with a survey form (**Supplement 1**), which listed a number of questions and relevant data to evaluate each of the five interplay dimensions.

In addition to the survey form, the experts were provided with a grading scale intended to ensure a similar starting point for evaluating each interplay dimension and the overall interplay between research and education within one discipline for each participating institution. The numeric grades are,

[1] http://www.studiebarometeret.no/en/

however, not reproduced in this report. Instead, the experts provide substantial reasoning for their assessment in the form of a written statement for each interplay dimension.

On the basis of this reasoning and of their comparison of the research panel reports and educational panel reports, they were also asked to comment upon the relationship between interplay and research and educational quality for each institution as well as within the discipline on a national level.

Finally, the experts were requested to formulate conclusions and to provide recommendations, as far as possible, on ways to enhance the positive synergies between research and education with a view to enhance quality at an institutional and national level.

## 1.4 *Disciplinary panels*

The interplay evaluation was undertaken by six experts from the research and education panels. The goal was to assess the relationship between research quality and educational quality in political science, sociology and economics, taking its point of departure in the institutions and programmes participating in the education evaluation. The six experts were paired in three teams (political science, sociology and economics) and asked to make evaluations of interplay at each institution within their discipline.

### 1.4.1 Participating institutions and study programmes

In Norway, a bachelor's degree (180 ECTS) is a first-cycle academic degree awarded by the higher education institution upon completion of the programme. A master's degree is a second-cycle academic degree (120 ECTS). The degree requires previous study at the bachelor level, in social sciences usually completed as separate bachelor's degree.[2] A PhD degree is a third-cycle academic degree (180 ECTS). The degree requires previous study at the master's level, usually completed as separate master's degree.

As participation in the education evaluation was optional, not all existing study programmes chose to be included in the evaluation; this was especially the case for programmes with a multidisciplinary profile. However, the educational evaluation does cover the core educational offer within all three disciplines. Table 2 below presents the list of participating institutions and study programmes by discipline. As the table shows, 24 programmes from eight institutions participated in the sociology panel evaluation. The political science evaluation comprised 19 study programmes from seven institutions. Finally, 16 programmes from five institutions participated in the economics evaluation.

[2] Lovdata, Forskrift om krav til mastergrad, FOR-2005-12-01-1392, sist endret, ved forskrift 10.6. (2015; FOR-2015-06-10-620), www.lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2005-12-01-1392; Lov om universiteter og høyskoler (universitets- og høyskoleloven), 1. April 20015, nr. 15, LOV-2005-04-01- 15, sist endret 16. Juni, 2017; LOV-2017-06-16-67.

**Table 2: List of participating institutions and study programmes by discipline**

| Institutions | Study programmes | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Sociology panel* | *Economics panel* | *Political Science panel* |
| **Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)** | 1. BA Sociology<br>2. MA Sociology<br>3. PhD Sociology | 1. BA Economics<br>2. MA Economics (2 years)<br>3. MA Economics (5 years)<br>4. PhD Economics | 1. BA Political Science<br>2. MA Political Science<br>3. PhD Political Science |
| **University of Oslo (UiO)** | 4. BA Sociology<br>5. MA Sociology<br>6. PhD Sociology | 5. BA Economics<br>6. MA Economics (2 years)<br>7. MA Economics (5 years)<br>8. PhD Economics | 4. BA Political Science<br>5. MA Political Science<br>6. PhD Political Science |
| **University College of South-Eastern Norway (HSN)** | 7. BA Sociology<br>8. MA Social Science | | |
| **University of Stavanger (UiS)** | 9. BA Sociology | | 7. BA Political Science |
| **University of Bergen (UiB)** | 10. BA Sociology<br>11. MA Sociology | 9. BA Economics<br>10. BA Political Economy<br>11. MA Economics (2 years)<br>12. MA Economics (5 years) | 8. BA Comparative Politics<br>9. BA Administration and Organisation Theory<br>10. MA Comparative Politics<br>11. MA Administration and Organisation Theory<br>12. MA Public Administration |
| **University of Agder (UiA)** | 12. BA Sociology<br>13. MA Sociology and Social Work<br>14. PhD Social Science | | 13. BA Political Science<br>14. MA Political Science and Management<br>15. PhD Public Administration |
| **Nord University** | 15. BA Sociology<br>16. MA Social Science (sociology)<br>17. PhD Sociology | | |
| **Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)** | | 13. BA Economics<br>14. MA Economics | |
| **UiT – the Arctic university of Norway** | 18. BA Sociology<br>19. MA Sociology<br>20. PhD Humanities and Social Sciences | 15. BA Economics<br>16. MA Economics | 16. BA Political Science<br>17. MA Political Science |
| **Oslo Metropolitan University (formerly Oslo and Akershus University College)** | | | 18. BA Administration and Management<br>19. MA Public Management |
| **Study programmes in total** | **24** | **16** | **19** |

Ten universities and university colleges participated in the interplay evaluation. Since the interplay evaluation is designed to draw on data from both the education and research evaluations, the evaluation is, of necessity, limited to the institutions and study programmes that contributed to both evaluations. The education evaluation, being smaller in scope, was the limiting factor. All the institutions that participated in the education evaluation also participated in the research evaluation.

Unfortunately, while the PhD level is a potentially rich field for studying the interplay between research and education, the interplay evaluation has only been able to address the PhD level to a very limited extent. While the education evaluation was designed to cover the PhD level at all institutions

offering PhD educations in the relevant disciplines, and the self-assessment forms requested information at this level, most institutions omitted to send in data on their PhD educations. This could suggest a tendency to see PhD education somewhat unilaterally as part of an institution's research activity, rather than also seeing it as part of its educational provision. This is itself an interesting aspect of research-education interplay in Norwegian higher education, and NOKUT and the RCN hope that future evaluations will be able to address this interplay in more detail at PhD level.

### 1.4.2 Members of the panel

*Political science*

Professor Anne Skorkjær Binderkrantz, Aarhus Universitas. Head of the educational panel for political science.

Professor Svend-Erik Skaaning, Aarhus Universitas. Member of the research panel for political science.

*Sociology*

Professor Christofer Edling, Lund University. Head of the educational panel for sociology.

Professor Katarina Jacobsson, Lund University. Member of the research panel for sociology.

*Economics*

Professor Henri de Groot, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Head of the educational panel for economics.

Professor Christian Schultz, University of Copenhagen. Member of the research panel for economics.

# 2 Interplay between education and research

Explicit discussions about the relationship between education and research have been ongoing over several decades. There have been discussions on whether there actually exists a relationship, on its direction, strength and its embeddedness in field-specific contexts, and discussions on whether such relationships vary across levels of study, and on whether there actually is a normative assumption behind a positive link (for different overviews, see e.g. Hattie & Marsh, 1996; Kyvik & Vågan, 2014; Trowler & Wareham, 2007). This complexity also sets a difficult starting point for an evaluation of the relationship between the two constructs education and research. When referring to the relationship between education and research, synonymous terms like link, association and interplay are used interchangeably.

To unpack some of this complexity NOKUT commissioned NIFU to develop a set of indicators examining the interplay between education and research with the aim of informing the joint evaluations of research and education in the social sciences in Norway. The original project consisted of a literature review which informed the development of a set of indicators. The review was drawn on a systematic search in Google Scholar, hand searches in selected journals and websites, and snowball searches of reference lists of existing core literature. Insights gained from the review were then used to inform a set of indicators. The project results, including the literature review and an indicator set, were published in a report in spring 2016 (Elken & Wollscheid, 2016). This chapter summarizes these results. The indicator set proposed in the report have also been the basis for NOKUT and the RCN's proposed indicators for this interplay evaluation (see Chapter 1).

## 2.1 *Core concepts: education and research*

Any discussion of the relationship between education and research should start by operationalising these two terms (Elken & Wollscheid, 2016, p. 15). First, the term research is often used as a means to refer to the three main R&D activities - basic and applied research, and experimental development - a categorization that is also used in the production of research statistics (OECD, 2002). Yet, this definition is not able to take into account variations across disciplines (Becher & Trowler, 2001), various national contexts, and even variations between individual researchers (Visser-Wijnveen, Van Driel, Van der Rijst, Verloop, & Visser, 2009). Further variations can also occur due to language used to describe research activities (for instance, the English word 'research' has a broader meaning than the Norwegian term 'forskning', see Kyvik & Vågan, 2014). To have an inclusive starting point, the review chose a broad conception of research for the review. Second, the term education can be divided into two processes: teacher activities and student learning processes. While teaching and learning are inherently interlinked, their relationship to research can also vary. In the review, the two were kept separate – and studies were examined in terms of their focus on the research-teaching or research-learning relationship.

## 2.2 *Typologies and links between education and research*

The review identifies a range of existing typologies for how the relationship between research, teaching and learning has been conceptualized (see, for example, Griffiths, 2004; Healey, 2005; Jenkins, Breen, & Lindsay, 2007; Trowler & Wareham, 2007). The most widely used typology is the one developed by Healey (2005), drawing on conceptualizations by Griffiths (2004). Healey uses two dimensions – whether activities are student or teacher focused, and whether they emphasize research

content or research problems and processes. Based on these two dimensions, he identifies four possible variations or categories of how research impacts teaching: 1) research-tutored (curriculum emphasizes learning focused on students writing and discussing papers or essays), 2) research-based (curriculum emphasizes students own inquiry-based learning), 3) research-led (curriculum is structured around teaching subject content) and 4) research-oriented education (curriculum emphasizes teaching processes of knowledge construction in the subject). Ozay (2012) suggested that an overarching term for these four categories should be 'research-informed', that is, the curriculum is organized in a way that implies a systematic inquiry into teaching and learning processes.

Key criticisms of existing models and typologies is that they have often had a normative starting point of the positive aspects of the link between education and research, limited focus on identifying a causal link and its direction, and that the link should be viewed differently on different levels of analysis and within disciplines (Trowler & Wareham, 2007). However, while positive links are indeed in focus for most conceptualizations (see, e.g. Healey, 2005; Jenkins, 2004), there are also a few studies that examine an opposite relationship (Becker & Kennedy, 2005; Newby, 1999). A range of possible relationships have been suggested in addition to a positive relationship - ranging from no relationship, to a negative relationship or a mixed relationship (Trowler & Wareham, 2007).

In the Norwegian context, the term 'research-based education' (*forskningsbasert utdanning)* is established in the law, while ambiguity remains with respect to what this concept entails in practice. At least seven possible interpretations can be identified (Kyvik & Vågan, 2014; Kyvik, Vågan, Prøitz, & Aamodt, 2015):

- Education is linked to a research environment
- Education is conducted by staff who also do research
- Education builds on existing research of the field
- Education provides knowledge about philosophy of science and research methods
- Students learn how research is conducted and produces new knowledge
- Students participate in academic staff research projects
- Students conduct own research as a part of their studies

## 2.3 *Research and teaching*

The review identified three broad groups of literature regarding the relationship between research and teaching: those focused on a positive relationship, on a negative one, or identifying more mixed relationships (Elken & Wollscheid, 2016, p. 22).

In general, it was argued that studies drawing on data from academic staff found support for a positive relationship (see for example  Rowland, 1996; Smeby, 1998; Teichler, Arimoto, & Cummings, 2013). Empirical studies indicated that traditional teaching methods have shown limited positive effects, while engaging students in research activities has shown a positive effect (Horta, Dautel, & Veloso, 2012), suggesting that teaching methods also matter for the relationship between staff and students (Horta et al., 2012). Those who argue for a strong relationship have also argued for an even more integrated relationship. For example, Brew (2003) has proposed a model of 'academic communities of practice' which would view research and teaching as elements in a process of negotiating the knowledge content through social interaction. Here, both groups, teachers and students, are regarded as mutual partners, i.e. academics or scholars.

Yet, the review also shows that the evidence appears to be rather mixed; a number of meta-analyses and single studies have reported either a weak or non-existent relationship (see, for example, Hattie & Marsh, 1996; Marsh & Hattie, 2002; uz Zaman, 2004). Part of these results could also be explained by system structure, e.g. a stratified system with diverse institutional profiles regarding research intensiveness can impact such quantitative relationships (Hattie & Marsh, 2004). Second, steering structures and incentive systems are important contextual factors (Geschwind & Broström, 2015) which affect the nature of the relationship between research and teaching. The review identified a third group of studies that focus on this contextualized and conditioned nature of the relationship, e.g. in terms of student motivation (Elton, 2001) or the characteristic of academic staff (Shin, 2011).

## 2.4 *Research and learning*

The review examines various forms of undergraduate research, a concept that has gained prominence in the last twenty years. The basic underlying idea for undergraduate research is the idea of inquiry based learning. While the term has also been marked by unclear boundaries vis a vis other student active learning forms (Damşa et al., 2015), it is also argued to be an important means to link research and education (Spronken-Smith & Walker, 2010). Students in his context are viewed as active participants, not only receiving knowledge, but also becoming engaged in how knowledge is made and over time, becoming involved in the knowledge production process (Boughey, 2012; Hensley, 2015; Levy & Petrulis, 2012). While the initial ideas focused on involving a select few excellent students, there have now also been calls to introduce undergraduate research as a mainstream practice (Healey & Jenkins, 2009). As an example, the use of bachelor and master theses can be seen as one expression of undergraduate research. Despite these calls for more mainstreaming, the studies examined in the review are often based on single case studies in specific subject-specific contexts, and frequently with a focus on sharing good practices (Elken & Wollscheid, 2016, p. 28).

The term ‘undergraduate research’ refers to a range of different practices: whether and how it is integrated into the curriculum or whether it remains extra-curricular, whether it is offered to selected groups of students or all students, in addition to variations across different disciplinary and professional fields (Beckman & Hensel, 2009). There seems to be disciplinary variation with respect to participation in undergraduate research (Fechheimer, Webber, & Kleiber, 2011). For undergraduate research, the question of how research is defined is particularly important, given that students’ engagement with research would take place within a specific disciplinary or professional context. Student involvement in research could be in staff research projects, but it can also include other activities, such as writing literature reviews or presenting. The review also examines existing empirical evidence regarding the positive effects of undergraduate research, and finds mixed results regarding interest in future research careers and varying positive effect regarding academic performance (Elken & Wollscheid, 2016, pp. 32-34). It should be noted that these mixed results could also be explained by methodological challenges in identifying effects, and overall, there seem to be more studies that emphasize positive effects.

## 2.5 *Research-based curriculum*

Integration of teaching and research does not take place in a vacuum. Brew (2013) has thus argued for viewing the curricula itself as research-based, where students as learners are always embedded in a wider organizational/institutional, societal and disciplinary/professional context. A core question is the

authority various actors have in deciding various aspects of the curricula and whether these are research-based. Thus, careful attention is needed regarding how inquiry-based aspects are introduced into the curriculum, and to ensure that there is a variety of design choices (Elsen, Visser-Wijnveen, Van der Rijst, & Van Driel, 2009; Healey & Jenkins, 2009).

## 2.6 *Contextual factors*

There seems to be a consensus that one can expect the relationship to be stronger at higher levels of education. Existing studies show the strongest relationship on PhD level, and the weakest on bachelor level (Kyvik & Aamodt, 2015; uz Zaman, 2004). An interesting discussion in this respect is the role of the bachelor theses, which is often viewed as a part of a learning process (Kyvik & Aamodt, 2015; Smeby, 2000). In more general terms, however, this implies that one can expect that the relationship would differ according to the level of education in the same institution.

While there seem to be country specific variations, there do not seem to be major disciplinary differences for whether academic staff *values* the relationship (Teichler et al., 2013). Yet, the review showed a range of discipline-specific dilemmas for the scope and nature of the relationship. Kyvik and Vågan (2014) have shown that while on master and PhD level the relationship is strongest in natural sciences, medicine and technology, on bachelor level the traditional welfare state professions can show an equally strong relationship. Thus, while this evaluation includes three social science disciplines, the different disciplinary embeddedness of the three disciplines is an important variable when discussing the overarching conclusions.

In addition to these, an important contextual factor is the national institutional landscape. Given that Norway has both traditional research-intensive universities and new universities that have emerged from earlier university colleges, as well as colleges, one can expect some variation in how the link plays out in different institutional contexts. The processes of academization has also been argued to be one possible explanation for why the research-teaching link is such an important consideration in the Norwegian context (Kyvik & Aamodt, 2015). This also indicates that the specific organizational conditions and priorities are an important context for the interplay.

## 2.7 *Developing indicators for examining interplay*

The developed indicators took the conducted literature review as its starting point, and was also informed by examined existing sets of indicators developed in the Norwegian context (Lid, 2012; UHR, 2010). The principles adopted were that: a) given the lack of robust and well established conceptualizations of the research-education link the indicators should include varied data sources; b) to capture variety in academic practices, the indicators need to be broad enough; c) cost-effectiveness and realism in measurement (Elken & Wollscheid, 2016, p. 49). Based on these considerations the following indicators were identified:

**Table 1. Summary of proposed indicators.**

| Type | Indicators | Possible measurement |
|---|---|---|
| Input | Organizational conditions | Qualitative overview of existing institutional and faculty strategies for achieving excellence in education and research, the extent to which specific incentives and programmes have |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | been introduced, and the outcomes of such incentives. A realistic source for such information is either self-reports or qualitative analysis of existing document data from institutions. |
| | Academic staff R&D orientation | Composite indicator, including staff with PhD level competence, as well as number and quality of publications, complemented with self-reported data on developmental work and other research-related activities that would not be expressed through traditional publication patterns. |
| | Research-based curriculum | Qualitative overview of organization of study programmes structure. For example: scope and placement of bachelor and master thesis in the study programme, as well as organization of research methods courses. |
| Process | Use of student-active learning forms | Multiple data sources. Self-reported data from students (i.e. *Studiebarometeret*), as well as self-evaluation reports from institutions and/or staff surveys. |
| | Variation of teaching and learning methods | The combination and variety of teaching and learning methods employed in the study programme. Data sources for such information would be self-evaluation from study programmes. Another possible source for such data could be student feedback or staff questionnaires. |
| | Involvement in staff research (on master level primarily) | Share of students involved in staff research. |
| Output | Assessment practices | Quantifiable data from curriculum regarding share of various assessment methods. |

Source: Elken & Wollscheid 2016: 54

Taking these as a starting point, NOKUT and the RCN identified a set of indicators for the assessment of interplay in the joint evaluation of research and education in the social sciences in Norway (see Chapter 1).

# 3 Political Science

## 3.1 *Norwegian University of Science and Technology*

### 3.1.1 Comparison: research and education reports

Teaching and research at the Department of Sociology and Political Science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) address most of the classical sub-disciplines of political science, including comparative politics, conflict studies, political behaviour, international relations, and public administration. Political theory is a partial exception to the comprehensive coverage of fields; it does not receive much attention in research at the department, and it does not figure prominently in the course work, although debates in political theory are addressed in a number of courses. The number of researchers as well as the number of students are relatively high for Norwegian circumstances.

The SAMEVAL report identifies NTNU as a well-performing political science institution. Out of the 22 evaluated institutions, it is one of just five receiving a score of 4 on the five-point scale. The affiliated researchers publish original, high quality work in a broad range of political science fields, especially in the subfields of political behaviour and conflict studies. Moreover, the staff has several members with international backgrounds and has well-established networks with leading scholars and research institutions in Norway and abroad. However, the SAMEVAL report also states that the department could do better in terms in attracting external funding, increase the societal impact, get more researchers to publish in top journals, and improve the institutional support for research.

The KOMBEVAL report shows that the department not only produces good research but also performs well with regard to teaching. The department offers a full range of political science degrees, including a three-year bachelor programme, a two-year master programme, and a PhD programme. Among the positive attributes the report emphasizes the programme designs, clear connections between learning outcomes and programme design, and the academic competence of the teachers, who are generally active researchers. Among the issues that may be improved, the KOMBEVAL report mentions the learning environment and the promotion of internships.

Hence, the evaluations of research and education in political science taking place at NTNU are both rather positive. The conscious attempt to create interplay between research and education is demonstrated by the fact that the programme design is related to the research carried out by academic staff in the department.

Taken together, good research is paralleled by good teaching in relation to political science at NTNU. The staff members responsible for teaching and supervision are generally active and productive researchers, and the students are enrolled in well-structured programmes, which are aligned with – and utilize – the research profiles of the faculty.

### 3.1.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The Department of Sociology and Political Science at NTNU provides good organizational conditions for the study programmes offered in the field of political science. The department is particularly strong in the field of comparative politics broadly conceived and there are therefore excellent staff capacities for teaching core courses such as International and Comparative Politics and more advanced courses offering students specialization opportunities. In other subfields of political science such as public policy, public administration and political theory the number of relevant staff members for teaching is smaller and courses within these fields are either dependent on the few researchers active in the field or taught by non-experts.

It is clear from the self-assessment reports that teaching concerns are a crucial part of the recruitment process in terms of hiring new faculty. Applicants for vacant positions are asked to do trial lectures for staff and students and questioned about teaching plans or ideas. Besides pedagogical competence it is, however, not clear whether identified gaps in teaching capacities are considered when recruiting new staff. There may thus be a tradeoff between recruiting new staff members that may contribute to existing research groups and staff members that may solidify the research backing of teaching, for example within political theory.

The standard teaching load is set at 45 percent of working hours, but it is possible to reduce this through external funding. Based on the current teaching offered by the department it seems that most staff members are active in teaching.

#### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Teaching is mainly carried out by active researchers and the self-assessment report states that 95 percent of teaching is by academic staff with PhD or equivalent qualifications.

At the BA level, the programme includes a number of broad courses introducing students to the various subfields of political science as well as a number of more specialized course options. Both types of courses are typically taught by active researchers within the field. In the broader courses, the subjects covered will obviously include some where the researchers have limited research experience. The electives, on the other hand, clearly reflect the research profiles of the staff members.

The MA combines a substantive focus with a strong focus on research methods. There is one mandatory course on democratic theory and a number on methodology. Given the limited staff within political theory it is surprising to see this as a mandatory course (Theories of Democracy) at the MA level. In correspondence with the BA electives, the electives at the MA level closely reflect research interests of staff members.

According to the self-assessment, the different research groups at the department are responsible for contributing to specialized courses. This allows for a direct link between research and teaching and presumably also facilitates collective responsibility for securing a diverse set of electives.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

The programme structure facilitates a gradual acquirement of insight into research methodology. Students are introduced to research methodology from the first semester of the bachelor programme, where a 15 ECTS course includes an introduction to both quantitative and qualitative methods. In addition, the course 'Models and Theories in Political Science' provides students with increased understanding of research methods as a background to writing their BA thesis on the 6th semester. The BA thesis accounts for 15 ECTS and it is specified that the thesis needs to meet demands for scientific work.

The MA programme includes a mandatory course on statistics as well as a choice between additional methods courses. With the offer of an elective on advanced statistical analysis students are able to acquire a high level of competence particularly in regard to quantitative analysis. The MA thesis is written in the last year of the programme in connection to one of the substantive electives offered by the department. Overall, there seems to be good progression in the development of students' research skills from the introductory methods course on the first semester of the BA programme to the MA thesis.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

While the courses on research design and methods are those most directly targeted towards developing the research skills of students, this is also a focus in other courses. According to the self-assessment, all courses in political science have a strong research component. This is most evident in an emphasis on providing students with feedback on their research and writing, as well as in the individual supervision for BA and MA theses.

The exam forms reflect the stage in the programme. In the introductory courses the typical exam is a written exam, but students are also required to write 'term papers' that are presumably more useful in developing research skills. The typical exams at the more specialized courses at the MA level are on the other hand research papers, which generally imply more training of the research skills of students than written exams. It is also notable that oral exams are often used in combination with research papers.

In Studiebarometeret, NTNU students at the BA level rate their 'Knowledge of scientific work methods and research' at 3.7, while the mean for MA students is 4.2. Both these figures are somewhat above the national average. When asked about their 'Experience with research and development work' the corresponding answers are 2.8 (BA) and 3.4 (MA).

### Involvement in staff research

The political science students at NTNU are involved in staff research in different ways, especially at the MA level. In a mandatory course on the MA level, 'Research Design and Methods', researchers and students discuss best practices in research design and methods. Research proposals by faculty members are evaluated by students, who also have to construct and implement their own research design. Many students explore datasets collected at the department and some are also involved in staff research through their master thesis, where they write their thesis on topics associated with ongoing

research carried out by local researchers – sometimes even as part of larger projects. Especially gifted master students often work for researchers as research assistants, and on rare occasions students publish papers with staff members.

### 3.1.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

At NTNU, active and productive researchers constitute a sound foundation for advanced training of the political science students at all levels. Active researchers teach at all levels and are responsible for almost all teaching and supervision. Especially the MA level is rather research oriented, which is reflected in the courses offered, the exam types, and the discussion of research proposals from both sides (students and researchers). There is a conscious focus on utilizing the research profiles actively in the teaching, which is to the benefit of both scholars and students, who can stimulate each other and learn from the interaction.

However, the close integration of the teaching programmes with the research conducted at a department of moderate size comes with the risk of neglecting issues not covered by the research profiles of the faculty, such as political theory or particular topics and approaches related to the other subfields. This could influence the motivation and independence of some students in a negative direction, both if they feel they have to work on subject matters that they would otherwise not prioritize and if they tend to largely 'copy' the theoretical and empirical approaches used by the teachers.

In the case of NTNU, interplay between research and teaching clearly takes place. However, the education and research evaluation reports point out a need for improvements regarding both the learning environment for the political science students and the research environment for the academic staff. The positive interplay could be undermined if these issues are not addressed in a timely and effective manner.

## 3.2 *Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences* [3]

### 3.2.1 Comparison: research and education reports

Teaching and research at the Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA) is concentrated within the field of public administration and leadership at the Department of Public Management and Leadership and thus do not cover all the classical sub-disciplines of political science. The number of students is relative high compared to other Norwegian political science institutions.

According to the SAMEVAL report, the scientific impact has increased in recent years. The political science research receives the intermediate score of 3. The background for this assessment is that the researchers do pretty well in terms of the number of publication points. However, most of the research is published in Norwegian and has a low scientific impact factor. Only a few papers have a very high scientific quality and are published as articles in international top journals or as book chapters with leading presses. Taking into consideration that HiOA offers less time for academic research than most universities and applied research institutes, the research output is decent.

The SAMEVAL report identifies a number of points that can be improved: the research quality, the international profile and diversity of the staff, and the facilitation of research collaboration.

HiOA offers a bachelor programme in Administration and Management and a master programme in Public Management. The KOMBEVAL report states that these study programmes are generally good. They provide a good and well-integrated set of courses. The courses combine elements from several academic disciplines with a focus on practical relevance. There seems to be a good link between the programmes and the overall learning outcomes. Yet, the KOMBEVAL evaluation also highlights a number of shortcomings: more readings could be based on the international research literature and international textbooks; the programmes could benefit from more methods training; the students could receive more supervision in connection to their master thesis; and teachers could be more embedded in the international research environment.

Taken together, both research and education at HiOA are of intermediate quality. There is some interplay between research and education. However, the lack of high quality research tends to influence the content of the programmes, such as the selected reading material and the amount of methods training. Both the education evaluation and the research evaluation emphasize that it would be good for the institution if the researchers/teachers would get more international profiles. The aim of all this and the other recommendations can be boiled down to two issues: higher research quality and updated training, which tend to complement each other.

### 3.2.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The HiOA provides a reasonable organizational setting for the BA programme in Administration and Management and the MA in Public Management – although the rather complex organizational

[3] In January 2018 the institution obtained university status and is now called OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University. This assessment refers to HiOA, given that this was the institutional context in which the assessment was conducted.

structure makes it somewhat difficult to evaluate the link between the research structure and the educational programmes. Most centrally, the Department of Public Management and Leadership employs a number of staff focusing their research interest on organization and management as well as on management in respect to professions. There is therefore a clear link between the research interests at the department and the educational programmes offered. A central strategic priority at HiOA is to strengthen the research environment and thus the organizational conditions facilitating research-based education.

In decisions about hiring new faculty, teaching qualifications are considered. There is emphasis on formal qualifications in terms of pedagogical courses, but it is also mentioned that previous teaching experiences are considered. In addition, trial lectures are used.

With respect to time allocated for research and teaching, the HiOA differentiates between different staff categories. While professors have 45% of their time earmarked for research and development, the equivalent share is 25% for assistant and 35% for associate professors. Part of the teaching staff thus has rather limited time set aside for research.

### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

The overall research focus in the Department of Public Management and Leadership matches the content of the educational programmes.

The BA programme has a relatively fixed structure combining courses on core issues within the field of public management with courses on for example public law and economy. The mandatory courses such as 'Styring og samfunn' draw mainly on Norwegian language textbooks. One semester is set aside for electives and the linkage to the research done at the department is most clear with respect to these courses. Most teachers of these courses are active researchers in the field, but the research profiles of those teachers differ with some mainly focused on publishing books in Norwegian and others on contributing to the international literature. Overall, the BA is more focused on developing the professional skills of students with respect to for example public law and economy than introducing them to research within the field of public administration.

At the MA level, students have a limited number of mandatory courses including a course on research methodology and substantial room for electives. The electives are clearly research-based although there is often an additional focus on obtaining relevant leadership skills. The programme thus reflects that most students are part time students. Reading lists often combine text books in Norwegian with international journal articles. The portfolio of courses include both some that are relatively closely linked to the research interests of faculty members and some that are somewhat more remote from staff research, for example because they focus on related fields such as law and economy.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

Compared to most other programmes within the broad discipline of political science, the HiOA programmes have relatively limited focus on developing the research skills of students. The BA includes a 10 EC course on methods that aims to provide students with the skills to read and critically assess literature within the social sciences. The BA thesis involves independent research collection and thus aims at developing the research skills of students.

For MA students, there is one 10 EC course on research methods and theory of science. While this course includes introductions to a range of different methods, students will not be able to obtain research skills at an advanced level through a single course. Also, there are no electives offered within the field of methods. The learning outcomes for the MA thesis involve demonstration of methods skills and overall the MA project is described as a limited research project ('avgrenset forskningsprosjekt'). Here, the ambition is thus that students do indeed demonstrate their acquisition of research skills. Overall, the MA programme has very little focus on developing the research skills of students compared to other MA programmes in the field.

#### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

According to the self-assessment, it is a priority in the programmes to develop students' research abilities through process-based learning. Students are thus working with datasets such as the European Social Survey and in some instances also involved in their own data collection. This is recommendable, but may also be considered standard for all programmes within political science. It is also worth noting that MA students are achieving research experience by undertaking research assistant tasks and that these may entail course credits.

In Studiebarometeret it is interesting to note that BA students score relatively high on the questions 'knowledge of scientific work methods and research' (3.8) and 'experience with research and development work' (3.8). While both these numbers are higher than the national average, the MA students have lower scores on both items (3.5 and 3.6 respectively).

#### Involvement in staff research

In recent years, courses have been developed that allow MA students to become involved in ongoing research projects. The students are awarded course credits for tasks related to these projects if they prepare minor scientific reports. In addition, small scholarships are awarded to a number of MA students, who can write MA thesis in collaboration with one or more researchers.

### 3.2.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

There are conscious attempts at creating a positive interplay between research and teaching at HiOA. Some of their initiatives stand out, such as offering course credits for research assistants, involvement of students in ongoing research through course work, and small scholarships for students that collaborate with researchers on their MA thesis.

Nonetheless, the lack of high quality research that meets international standards put serious limits on the interplay between research and teaching. For example, the curricula of the courses and the methods training reflect that the research basis for the study programmes is not well developed and that the research at HiOA only covers a limited range of political science subjects.

Similarly, the fact that many of the MA students are part-time students and that the programmes are partly focused on a broader set of more practice oriented skills also challenges the foundation for a successful interplay between research and teaching. Consequently, more research quality and

internationalization is warranted in order to lift the political science teaching, but even if this is achieved, it will be difficult to create a fruitful interplay in this context.

## 3.3 *University of Agder*

### 3.3.1 Comparison: research and education reports

The Department of Political Science and Management at the University of Agder (UiA) covers the classical sub-disciplines of political science, including political theory, comparative politics, international relations, public policy, and public administration. The number of researchers and students are among the lowest in Norway for a political science institution combining research with educational responsibilities.

The SAMEVAL evaluation mentions that research at the political science institute covers a fairly large variety of topics with an emphasis on the local/regional level and the European/supranational level. The share of publications in English and with international co-authors is relatively high. The research quality is generally judged to be between fair and good (the assigned score is 3), and some of the individual publications are well-cited. The productivity and scientific impact are close to the national average for political science on average. However, there is a significant imbalance in the productivity of the researchers and much variation in the quality of the research output.

The research evaluation recommends that the institution should utilize research groups further to discuss research strategies, research ideas, papers and grant applications; increase the number of researchers in order to get a more sustainable research environment; and attract more external funding.

The institution offers a bachelor programme in Political Science, a master programme in Political Science and Management, and a PhD programme in Public Administration. The KOMBEVAL evaluation praises the programmes and courses for being well-structured. It also mentions that the students get a lot of supervision and teaching, and they are offered extensive international exchange opportunities.

The KOMBEVAL report suggests that the institute should align the stated learning outcomes better with what is actually covered by the courses. It also suggests placing more emphasis on methods training, using more research literature rather than textbooks, increasing variation in the exam forms, and increasing the number of teachers who are both active researchers and have sufficient pedagogical training.

Taken together, an intermediate level of quality characterizes both political science research and education at the UiA. The research profile of the institute is reflected in the programmes and courses offered. However, imbalances among the scholars as regards research productivity and quality seem to affect the teaching in terms of heavy reliance on textbooks, the priority of some subfields, and insufficient attention to methods training. The SAMEVAL and KOMBEVAL evaluations agree that it makes sense for this small institution to specialize its teaching and research profile, but also that this inevitably means that not all sub-disciplines of political science are covered well. Moreover, they agree that the number of active researchers should be increased to get the research environment as well as the teaching up to beat. The other recommendations are more specifically directed to research and education, respectively. One should note, however, that there does not seem to be a trade-off between the suggestions.

### 3.3.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The Department of Political Science and Management at the UiA is relatively small, with 12 permanent professors and associate professors and a number of lecturers. Since lecturers (universitetslektor) do not have much time allocated for research, the research basis of the educational programmes is limited.

The research at the department focuses on two main strands: local and supranational governance, and within these fields the department has considerable strength. On the other hand, when it comes to key sub-disciplines of political science, such as political theory and political behaviour, the department does not have active researchers within the field. Key areas of the discipline will therefore either need to be absent from the study programmes or be taught by researchers who are not active in the sub-discipline.

In recruiting new staff members, the department strategy is to hire staff members with both research and teaching skills. In addition, it is considered how new staff members fit into the overall teaching profile of the department. It is not clear from the self-assessment whether this is interpreted as further improving the strength within the areas that are emphasized in specialization options in the study programme or recruiting staff members in those areas that are not presently covered by staff members.

When it comes to distribution of work, professors and associate professors have a typical teaching load of 50% while 40% of their time is allocated to research. As mentioned above, lecturers do not have much time allocated for research, which means that a substantial part of teaching is not research-based in the sense that teaching is done by active researchers in the field.

#### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

The BA programme included in the evaluation is a BA in political science, while the MA is entitled ‘Political Science and Management’ and offers specializations in ‘Organization and Management’ as well as in ‘European Integration’. In the self-assessment it is reported that 70 percent of teachers at the BA level hold a PhD and the level is similar for the MA teachers.

The programme structure of the BA programme combines four semesters of mandatory courses with two semesters of electives. Most of the major sub-disciplines of political science are included in the programme, but there is a particularly heavy emphasis on organizational theory, public administration and supranational institutions. This very clearly reflects the research profile of the department. It is also evident that the courses that fall outside of the specialization at the department are generally not taught by researchers active in the relevant field. As mentioned in the KOMBEVAL report, the BA programme thus has a relatively strong emphasis on some aspects of political science and are clearly more research-based in those areas.

The MA is explicitly labelled as 'Political Science and Management' and the two specialization options reflect the particular emphasis put on the areas of organization and management and European integration. In this sense there is a very good match between the research profiles and groups at the department and the MA programme offered. Courses are taught by active researchers within the field, but it is curious to note the apparent lack of international journal articles in even advanced level MA courses (based on the reading lists available online).

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

The BA programme includes a 10 EC course on methods and allocates 10 EC to the BA thesis. This is relatively low by international comparison and seems to signal that the focus of the BA programme is more on providing students with thorough insights into a number of substantive areas than with research skills. The course on 'research methods in social sciences' provides students with an appropriate introduction to the basic methodological issues as well as specific methods. Still, in a 10 EC course the skills obtained will necessarily remain at a rather basic level. Similarly, even though the learning outcomes of the BA thesis include conducting an analysis the level of ambition must necessarily reflect the relatively low number of EC's dedicated to the work.

In contrast, the MA includes more methods training and in particular dedicates a substantial number of EC to writing the MA thesis. Two mandatory courses on research methodology of 10 EC each are included in the programme (although half of one course focuses on academic writing and philosophy of science). The course 'Research Methodology and Statistics' seems to follow up on the equivalent course at the BA level and addresses issues around research design, selection of analytical methods, and qualitative as well as quantitative skills. The additional course is presumably at a more advanced level, but seems to address many of the same issues through modules about for example research design, qualitative methods and quantitative methods. With 40 EC designated for writing the MA thesis there seems to be a high emphasis on students' ability to design and conduct independent research.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The material available for evaluating the degree of research orientation in teaching methods and assessment is limited. Still, the overall impression is that the focus on research orientation increases throughout the programme. In the BA programme many courses are evaluated by written exams, but in some courses students are also required to write essays as part of the exam or in the course of the semester. Also, in connection with the BA thesis students go through a course providing them with research skills such as those related to research design and data collection.

More emphasis on research skills is present at the MA level where the self-assessment states that many courses utilize a research-based teaching approach. It is also mentioned that some courses have been redesigned to include student research projects, but it is not clear to what degree this has in fact been implemented yet. Also, the apparent lack of original research articles on some reading lists at the MA level seems to contradict the emphasis on research skills.

In Studiebarometeret students score very close to the national average when asked about the degree to which their studies provide them with 'knowledge of scientific work methods and research' and

‘experience with research and development work’. As could be expected, MA students score higher than BA students with respect to these two questions.

#### Involvement in staff research

Students of political science at UiA occasionally participate as research assistants in research projects. More recently, a ‘students-in-research-programme’ has been established, where staff can apply for involving students in their research. Moreover, it is being considered to open up for the opportunity to do an internship as research assistants at the department.

### 3.3.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

There is a conscious fit between the research profiles at the department and the content of the political science study programmes at UiA – particularly at the MA level. Moreover, there is an increasing attention to involve students at the MA level in research related activities. Initiatives are considered or have already been implemented that would support the interplay between research and teaching.

Given the small size of the department, it seems plausible to focus the research on a few areas and to prioritize these research areas in the educations offered. Yet, this comes with the cost of relatively narrow education programmes in political science. This situation feeds a dilemma when recruiting new staff members: Should the department hire scholars specialized in already profiled areas in order to support a vibrant research environment or should it recruit scholars specialized in areas not covered well by the current faculty in order to secure research-based teaching in these areas? No matter the priorities, both evaluations say that more research staff is needed to lift the tasks.

Moreover, significant disparities among the academic staff concerning research productivity and quality tends to influence the courses in terms of reading materials and methods training. Also the fact that UiA is a small university distant from the major cities is challenging since the study programmes are likely to face difficulties attracting a critical mass of good students. A good amount of interplay between teaching and research in political science already exists at UiA, but structural conditions put limitations on how much it can be improved.

## 3.4 *University of Bergen*

### 3.4.1 Comparison: research and education reports

The representation of political science at the University of Bergen (UiB) is different from how the subject is normally organized in a Nordic context. There are two separate departments focusing on the subfields of political science: comparative politics (including political behaviour) and public administration (and organization studies more generally), respectively. Moreover, the subfields of political theory and international relations are not explicitly covered by any of the departments. While the separate departments and education programmes have an intermediate size, the combined numbers of researchers and students, respectively, are relatively high at the University of Bergen.

The SAMEVAL report identifies large variation in the quantity and quality of academic works produced by the affiliated researchers. They range from some with high-quality, innovative publications in top tier journals and with leading university presses, through some with solid papers published in second and third tier journals and edited volumes, to some with hardly any recent publications. This boils down to an intermediate score of 3 on research quality.

While the comparative politics department has a very diversified research profile in terms of methods and subject areas, research at the administration and organization department to a larger degree shares approach and substantive focus. Some of the research groups are very international in terms of the backgrounds and academic networks of the scholars, while others are less so. Finally, many of the researchers engage in interdisciplinary collaboration with scholars from related fields, such as law, sociology, economics, and media studies.

The SAMEVAL report suggests increased collaboration between the two departments, more gender balanced and international recruitment for some of the research groups, and further attention to strategies that would lead more researchers to publish in the most prestigious outlets.

Five study programmes organized by the two departments were included in the KOMBEVAL evaluation, i.e. a BA in Comparative Politics, a BA in Administration and Organization Theory, a MA in Comparative Politics, a MA in Administration and Organization Theory, and an English language MA in Public Administration. Both departments also offer PhD programmes.

According to the education evaluation, these study programmes are very good. Clear links between overall learning outcomes and the design of the courses and the programmes more generally are combined with teachers who are active scholars within the different subject matters.

The KOMBEVAL report identifies a number of points for improvement, including increased interaction between students and researchers, a better balance between different types of exams, and more coordination across the two departments with regard to the organization of political science related study programmes.

The evaluations indicate that political science education at UiB does comparatively better than political science research. The difference in how positive the respective evaluations are is not very big but still noteworthy.

Interestingly, both the research evaluation and the education evaluation urge the two departments to increase their collaboration. They agree in emphasizing the strong international dimension represented by faculty with international backgrounds, but also that more can be requested by the researchers – in the form of research output on the one hand and interaction with students on the other hand.

### 3.4.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

In respect to the organizational conditions, it is crucial that the field of political science at the University of Bergen is divided between two departments each responsible for a set of study programmes. There is overall a clear match between the research profiles and the studies organized by the department. Thus, the Department of Comparative Politics offer a BA and MA in Comparative Politics, while the Department of Administration and Organization is responsible for a BA in Administration and a Norwegian language MA in Administration and Organization Theory, and an English language MA in Public Administration.

When recruiting new staff members, both research and teaching qualifications are evaluated and the employment process requires documentation of educational competence. Trial lectures are used to get a further impression of pedagogical competence.

Even though the political science community is divided between two departments, each department has a substantial number of staff active in research of immediate relevance for the study programmes. Almost all scholars at the departments seem involved in both research and teaching and the standard time load is divided equally between teaching and research with 46 percent of time allocated to each task. It is possible to reduce the teaching load by buy-out from external funds.

#### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

The two BA programmes included in the evaluation each combine a number of mandatory courses (including methods courses) with a range of electives. The structure and degree of specialization in the electives offered differ somewhat between the programmes.

Given that the Bergen programmes have more specialized profiles than broad political science programmes at other universities even the mandatory courses are somewhat less encompassing than courses in many other programmes. While the match between the research interests of the teacher and the course content is necessarily not as direct in introductory courses as in more specialized courses, most teachers appear to be active researchers in the field of the courses, at least broadly conceived.

On the MA, students are required to take a limited number of mandatory courses with a substantive focus (1-2), while other mandatory courses focus on research design and methods. Although there is variation between the programmes it is noticeable that the MA programmes do not offer much room for electives as many EC are dedicated to mandatory courses and the MA thesis.

The electives – particularly in the Comparative Politics programmes – that are offered reflect in a very direct way the research interests of faculty. In the self-assessment, the electives are described as ‘researcher-driven’ and it is mentioned that electives are tied to research groups. This is also clear

from going through the set of electives offered to students. This is thus the setting where it is most immediately possible for students to connect to the research being done in the departments.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

There is overall much focus on the development of students' research skills in the study programmes at the University of Bergen. The two BA programmes include 15 EC methods courses and are concluded with a 10-15 EC BA thesis. The methods courses include both discussions of methodological choices and introductions to quantitative as well as qualitative methods. In relation to the BA thesis, students follow lectures and participate in advice seminars or seminar groups.

The MA programmes are very research oriented and include both mandatory methods courses and options for further specialization. It is thus possible to achieve sophisticated methods skills, particularly in regard to quantitative analyses. In addition, the MA thesis is allocated a full year of studies. There is much emphasis on the MA thesis as an independent research project. MA students are thus linked to the research groups at the departments and participate in weekly seminars with staff where they can present and discuss papers.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The material available for evaluating the degree of research orientation in teaching methods and assessment is limited. The self-assessment mentions that 'academic standards of research represent the dominant learning objective and assessment criteria' in all supervision and this corresponds well with the stated learning outcome in many courses, including the final theses.

There seems to be clear progression in the degree of research orientation throughout the programme. Many courses at the BA level are evaluated by written exam, but still require students to do mandatory assignments in the course of the semester – presumably giving room for developing research skills. The self-assessment also emphasizes that some of these assignments has a particular emphasis on methods. In the more advanced courses at the BA level and in regard to the BA and MA theses research skills are very clearly emphasized.

In their responses to Studiebarometeret, BA students at the University of Bergen rate their 'knowledge of scientific work methods and research' and 'experience with research and development work' slightly lower than the national average. MA students are on the other hand above the national average, particularly in regard to the latter question (3.8 compared to 3.4). Students also feel very prepared to work on the MA thesis – rated at 4.1.

### Involvement in staff research

At the Comparative Politics department, some BA students, and, more so, MA students are hired as part-time research assistants in connection to research projects. MA students are sometimes invited to write their MA thesis on a research question related to an ongoing research project, and this occasionally leads to further involvement by extraordinarily skilled students, who are hired on particular research project.

At the Organization and Administration department, BA students are occasionally hired as research assistants. Furthermore, the department seeks to integrate master students in ongoing research projects, and the master students are invited to participate in research seminars.

### 3.4.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

The teaching in political science at UiB is generally provided by active scholars within the different subfields. The fact that political science researchers at UiB teach in their areas of academic specialization is a positive feature. This priority also affects the course offering, which is good for the alignment of, and potential for interplay between, education and research.

However, there is a risk that the courses forming an explicit part of the study programmes get so specialized that they get vulnerable to changes in teaching personnel. Moreover, this sometimes means that equally, and maybe even more, important topics are not covered as well as one would expect at a large department.

At the MA level, different measures are used to train students through – and involve them in – ongoing research. Nonetheless, at both the BA and MA level there seems to be room for more interplay by increasing the interaction (classroom hours and supervision) between researchers and students.

The comparison of the evaluations of research and education, respectively, showed that the studies do somewhat better than research at the political science departments. This indicates that high quality research is not needed from all scholars involved in teaching in order to construct well-functioning study programmes and offer high quality education. That said, the study programmes build on many years of experience and a critical mass of productive scholars is present to secure a strong research foundation of the training.

## 3.5 *University of Oslo*

### 3.5.1 Comparison: research and education reports

Teaching and research at the Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo (UiO) cover all the classical sub-disciplines of political science, including political theory, comparative politics, political behaviour, international relations, and public administration. Both the number of researchers and number of students are high in a Norwegian context.

The SAMEVAL evaluation of political science at the Faculty for Social Sciences at UiO includes both the Department of Political Science and the ARENA Centre for European Studies. The report identifies the political science department at UiO as one of the best performing political science institutions in Norway with respect to research production and scientific quality. Out of 22 institutions, it is among the five institutions receiving a score of 4 (only one scores 5). The staff includes a number of internationally renowned scholars, and many of the researchers have strong international networks and take part in national and international research projects and other types of collaboration and exchange. The publications show great diversity in terms of topics as well as theoretical and methodological approaches. The quantity and quality of publications is considerable. Some of the works are published with the best international presses and in top tier journals. However, the SAMEVAL report also mentions that more researchers could be stimulated to publish in the best journals and with the best publishers.

The good research performance emphasized by the SAMEVAL report is paralleled by general praise of the two political science teaching programmes evaluated in the KOMBEVAL report, i.e. a general BA programme and a general MA programme in political science. Besides the provision of research-based education, it highlights well designed curricula and appropriate learning outcomes, which structure the individual courses and the programmes more generally. The students receive good and relevant academic training concerning relevant theories, empirics, and methods. However, the KOMBEVAL reports also states that the programme could benefit from further internationalization, more seminar style teaching at the MA level (closer interaction between teachers and students), and greater diversity in teaching and assessment methods.

Overall, the evaluations tend to agree that research and education at the department are of rather high standard. The link is nicely indicated in this quote from the KOMBEVAL report: ‘A strong connection between research and teaching is present as evidenced by the similarity of themes and topics appearing in the teaching lists of individual staff on the one hand, and research interests on the other’.

In short, high research quality goes hand in hand with high teaching quality in this case. Especially the MA tends to be very research oriented with a strong emphasis on methods training and much time devoted to the MA thesis. Researchers are responsible for teaching and supervision, and the students are urged to choose a research question that is related to research projects at the department. The research evaluation recommends the establishment of a more structured doctoral program, but this is not discussed in the KOMBEVAL report because the department for unknown reasons decided not to have this part of their educational obligation evaluated in this round.

Both reports refer to further internationalization among their recommendations. They emphasize different aspects of internationalization that can complement each other. Increase in external funding

from international sources is highlighted in the SAMEVAL report, while the KOMBEVAL report suggests an increase of courses (and maybe a whole program) taught in English. It also addresses the relatively low number of internationally recruited scholars. This issue is not addressed in the research evaluation, where more emphasis is put on imbalances in the gender and age distribution of the academic staff members.

### 3.5.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The organizational conditions for achieving a high level of interplay between research and education are good at the University of Oslo. With a large faculty covering all the main sub disciplines of political science, the department has a good point of departure for research-based education.

Teaching is a central part in the process of hiring new academic staff. Applicants for vacant positions are asked to do trial lectures and a noticeable feature is that these are integrated into existing courses where possible. Questions about teaching are also included in job interviews. On the other hand, it is not clear from the self-assessment reports whether concerns about the fit between the research interests of job applicants and the educational needs are part of the hiring process.

The ordinary teaching load of academic staff is 47 percent of the working hours. This leaves room for research since the administrative burdens for the academic staff do not seem to be so high. While it is possible to use external funding towards a lower teaching load, the department policy is that funding is used to cover both teaching and research time and it will normally not exceed 25% of the post. This is crucial for the ambition to link research and education because it ensures that staff members engaged in externally funded research projects are also teaching in the various educational programmes.

#### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Teaching in the political science programmes is mainly done by academic staff. The self-assessments reports that 90% of teaching is carried out by academic staff with a PhD degree. It is a priority of the department that teaching is based on research in relevant fields and this ambition is achievable as the department staff covers all main sub-disciplines of the field.

At the BA level, the programme structure includes mandatory courses covering the main sub-disciplines of the field and a number of electives. The mandatory courses are typically taught by active researchers within the sub-discipline but since these courses are by definition relatively broad the teachers usually also cover subjects where they do not have immediate research experience. The link between research and teaching is more direct when it comes to the electives as most of these are taught by staff who are active researchers in the field of the electives.

With respect to the MA level, the programme structure combines a strong emphasis on research methods and writing of the MA thesis with a number of electives. The electives offered by the department are clearly linked to the research interests of the teachers and offers good opportunities for students to interact with active researchers in the relevant fields.

The department has an ambition to secure a closer link between ongoing research at the department and the MA theses. The means used to meet this ambition include offering contact points at the department, presenting research projects to the students and employing MA students as scientific assistants. In addition, connections are made between MA students and other social science research institutions to facilitate linkages between research at these institutions and the MA program. While the self-assessment questions the extent to which this will in fact lead to more MA projects related to ongoing research these instruments are also crucial for securing the more general link between research and education in the MA program.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

The BA programme includes a 10 EC course on methods and statistics and a BA thesis which is also allocated 10 EC. This is relatively low by international comparison and signals a BA programme that is more focused on substantive issues than on developing the research skills of students. The content of the methods course includes an introduction to conducting empirical research within political science, as well as to both descriptive and inferential statistics. With respect to the BA thesis seminar (Politisk Analyse) it is noticeable that this includes a series of seminars where students present their research questions. Based on the learning outcomes for the BA seminar it seems that a typical BA thesis does not need to contain empirical analysis. This confirms the impression that the BA programme is not highly focused on developing the research skills of students.

In contrast, the MA programme includes 30 EC of methods and allocates 50 EC for working with the MA thesis. The methods element consists of a mandatory course and a number of more specialized electives covering for example quantitative text analysis or comparative analysis. The work on the MA thesis begins with participation in a seminar focused on research design with different subfields and is followed up with collective as well as individual advise sections. The MA programme is, in conclusion, highly focused on developing the research skills of students, and the learning outcome statement for the MA thesis describes this as a research report that meets the standards of scientific work.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

As discussed above, the overall impression of the BA programme is that this is not highly focused on developing research skills. There is, however, attention to increasing the emphasis on the development of analytically skills at the BA level. The elective courses at the BA level have thus been reorganized and several of these use assignments with independent research questions as exams. Also, the organization of the BA seminar emphasizes the development of academic authorship. Nevertheless, the general impression is that the teaching and especially the assessment methods at the BA level are more focused on securing that students obtain knowledge of the literature and substantive issues than on the research skills acquired. This is for example reflected in the use of 4 hour written exams for many mandatory courses.

The MA programme is much more research oriented. Here, the teaching and assessment methods are directed towards developing students' research skills and ultimately towards enabling them to write their MA thesis, which is considered a scientific assignment. The courses include student presentations of their own research ideas and students are trained in discussing the research ideas of others. Exam formats include the developing of research ideas and designs, as well as independent papers.

In their responses to Studiebarometeret, students confirm the difference in orientation between the BA and MA program. BA students score their 'knowledge of scientific work methods and research' at 3.4 and 'experience with research and development work' at 2.7, while the corresponding numbers are 4.0 and 3.2 for MA students. It is noticeable that both types of students are below the national average in their evaluation of 'experience with research and development work'. It is also interesting that MA students feel less prepared to work with their master thesis than students at other universities. This is surprising given the emphasis on this aspect in the study programme and the department may thus seek to investigate what this reflects.

#### Involvement in staff research

The available material offers relatively little information about the extent to which students are involved in staff research. As discussed above, there is attention towards connecting the MA thesis more to ongoing research projects. Also, MA students are linked to the research environment by working as scientific assistants on various projects.

### 3.5.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

The strong scientific track record of many faculty members facilitates research-based training of the political science students at all levels. Active researchers teach at all levels, and the large number of scholars and their diverse profiles in terms of methods and subjects mean that the students can get research-based teaching in many areas. The experience of this department thus supports that teaching should preferably be carried out by active scholars with strong research profiles, including high quality publications.

However, from an international perspective the limited EC devoted to methods courses and the BA thesis is remarkable. At this level there is therefore potential for further development of the linkage between research and teaching.

The positive interplay between research and teaching at the MA level could be also be increased by substituting more lectures with relatively small, elective courses. This would give even more scholars a chance to offer teaching that is closely aligned with their current research agendas.

## 3.6 *University of Stavanger*

### 3.6.1 Comparison: research and education reports

The research activities of the political scientists at the University of Stavanger (UiS) primarily concern the relation between the parliamentary system and corporatism in Norway, sustainable development, and local government studies. It is evident that these fields do not fully cover all major fields of political science. Especially, international relations and political theory are underrepresented, but this situation also applies to core elements of comparative politics and public administration. The gaps are partly reflected in the study program.

Relatively few researchers and students make this one of the smallest political science environments at Norwegian universities with responsibility for running a study program. The political scientists at UiS have no common, independent institutional reference point; teaching and research is scattered across various centers and departments, but most of them are affiliated to the Department of Media and Social Sciences.

Besides a few articles published in widely recognized journals, the quality of the research is not up to international standards; significant contributions are limited to a few scholars and topics. In addition, the average number of publications per researchers is in the low end. Some of the scholars have a strong international network but most collaboration takes places within Norwegian frameworks. On this basis, the political science research environment at UiS receives a rather low score (2) in the SAMEVAL report.

The same report argues in favour of a general strengthening of the political science environment by the provision of institutional independence followed up with sufficient means to facilitate more and better research via, for example, the recruitment of additional members.

Regarding teaching, the UiS hosts a relatively new BA programme in Political Science with two possibilities of specialization, which are linked to profiled research areas and the regional labor market. Whereas the programme is well-structured, it is in need of a stronger and broader political science profile. The KOMBEVAL evaluation therefore agrees with the official strategy to recruit new staff to achieve a better coverage and a better research foundation of the teaching. This should be supplemented with increased collaboration with other study programmes and further integration with local research institutes.

Moreover, the students are generally less satisfied with respect to many issues compared to the national average. Some of the issues concern too little interaction with staff members and a suboptimal academic environment more generally.

In sum, neither research nor education in political science at UiS receive good evaluations; the evaluation of education maybe being a bit less critical than the one focusing on research. When we take into account the limited institutional backing and the limited amount of resources available, this is not surprising. It seems worthwhile emphasizing that both evaluations suggest new recruitments (some were already underway during the evaluation process) as means to increase the coverage of political science areas and to create a more sustainable and vibrant research and learning environment.

### 3.6.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The evaluation includes only a single educational programme - the BA in political science that was established in 2011. This is anchored in the Department of Media and Social Science with a small core of staff being key responsible for the BA in political science. In addition, collaboration is in place with the International Research Institute of Stavanger (IRIS), with research groups encompassing employees from both institutions and some teaching being done by IRIS staff. As discussed above, the organizational conditions for the programme are challenged due to a limited number of staff available to cover teaching in a broad political science programme.

Educational concerns are included in the recruitment process as applicants for permanent positions are routinely asked to do trial lectures and document their teaching skills. Notably, the KOMBEVAL self-assessment also mentions that pedagogic skills are considered in regard to academic promotions as well as in wage negotiations. It is not clear to what degree it is a strategic priority to recruit new staff that may cover the areas of the educational programme that are particularly challenged by the limited staff available.

The academic staff divides their time equally between research and teaching – according to the SAMEVAL self-assessment the standard time allocation has an overweight on teaching, but individual adjustments are in place. The KOMBEVAL self-assessment states that approximately 90 percent of the academic staff has positions that include mandatory research.

#### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

According to the self-assessment, approximately 80 percent of teaching was done by academic staff with a PhD degree. The fit between the research interests of staff and the specific courses offered vary between the more general courses and courses of a more specialized nature.

The BA programme aims to provide students with insights into the central traditions within political science combined with more focused specialization options. The mandatory courses in the programme covers the main sub-disciplines within political science although comparative politics is less clearly covered than other sub-disciplines. Generally, the courses are taught by faculty who are – at least broadly speaking – researchers in the field. This is, however, not the case for all courses and based on the research profile of the staff it also seems that many courses rely on a single staff member being available for teaching.

The programme allows students to pursue specializations within management (personalledelse) or risk and emergency management (samfunnssikkerhet) in their second year. There is also a wide range of electives offered to students, but it is notable that many of these are not within the field of political science. This means that the programme does not offer many opportunities for students who want to specialize in sub-fields of political science that are outside of the specialization areas of the programme.

On the other hand, the focus on two specializations and a broad range of electives within social science allows for a closer fit between the subject of courses and the research interests of teachers. Still, it is notable that some of the specialization courses are taught by staff who have published very

little research and/or by staff who are clearly not within the discipline of political science. It is therefore questionable to what degree the specializations can be considered as research specializations within political science.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

Compared to other BA programmes in Norway the Stavanger BA in political science has a relatively marked focus on research design and methodology. There are two mandatory courses on methodology each set at 10 EC. The first course focuses on research theory and methods with in the social sciences and introduces students to fundamental issues such as the interplay between theory, methods and data. The second is a course on quantitative methods, where students learn both specific statistical methods and the issues that are related to conducting and analysing quantitative data. This course is evaluated with a 4 day take home exam that allows students to use their acquired skills.

In conclusion of the programme, students write a BA thesis that counts for 20 EC. The institution sees the BA thesis as central for teaching students scientific methods. In the fifth and sixth semester, bachelor seminars are organized and student write reflection papers as well as present and discuss their topics and methods of choice in class. The self-assessment underlines that the marking of the BA thesis is based on its scientific quality and it is specified in the description of the BA thesis that it needs to include both theoretical and empirical elements.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The material available for evaluating the degree of research orientation in teaching methods and assessment is limited. According to the self-assessment, the teaching of courses emphasizes that students are provided with a principal understanding of research and methodology. Academic argumentation is also in focus in the courses and central in the assessment of exams.

In correspondence with many other BA programmes in Norway, the exam form for the mandatory courses is usually a written exam. While this format does not facilitate the development of research skills, different assignments are typically used throughout the semester and these may presumably serve the purpose of enhancing students' skills in, for example, academic argumentation.

In response to Studiebarometeret's questions about whether they have 'knowledge of scientific work methods and research' and 'experience with research and development work' BA students in Stavanger score at or a little below the national average. This is somewhat surprising since the programme has more elements focused on research design and methods than most other BA programmes.

### Involvement in staff research

According to the self-assessment, researchers often present their research projects in order to inspire students when they have to determine the topic of their MA thesis and some of them are offered the possibility to become involved in these projects. Note, however, that no MA programme in political science is offered at UiS.

### 3.6.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

There is limited basis for a fruitful interplay between research and education in political science at UiS. Only a few members of the academic staff are within political science and most of them do not produce research that meets international standards, meaning that many topics are either left uncovered or treated in inadequate ways.

In a few profiled areas, there is sufficient research foundation for a fruitful interplay. However, since a study programme in political science is only offered on the BA level, the researchers cannot make as much use of their specialized expertise in their teaching as would otherwise have been possible.

Some of these problems tend to be partly grounded in a suboptimal institutional background, including lack of support from above and organizational incoherence. Paying more attention to these issues might help recruit good scholars that can create a broader, more international research profile. This could, in turn, provide a better basis for the existing BA programme and maybe also the development of an associated, specialized MA programme, so that there can be more suitable venues for interplay between research and teaching.

## 3.7 *University of Tromsø – The Artic University of Norway*

### 3.7.1 Comparison: research and education reports

Political science research at the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education at the University of Tromsø – the Arctic University of Norway (UiT) mainly focuses on Arctic governance, local democracy, and organization and leadership. This could give the impression that the coverage of political science is rather narrow, but research and teaching cover all the major fields, including comparative politics and political theory. That said, the amount of research and teaching (after the basic introduction on the first three semesters) in the different fields is somewhat skewed, which is natural since the number of political science researchers and the number of students are not so big (intermediate for Norwegian standards). Tellingly, the political scientists are placed in a department together with other social science disciplines.

The SAMEVAL evaluation states that political science research at UiT represents decent contributions to the mentioned research fields. However, they are generally not so theoretically innovative and the empirical works tend to be rather descriptive. Adding to this impression, the academic works are hardly ever published in top journals or with leading presses, and the productivity and scientific impact of political scientists at UiT is somewhat below the Norwegian average. Consequently, the research quality achieves a relatively low score (2).

Against this backdrop, the SAMEVAL report mentions that political science researchers at UiT should increase their level of ambition and carry out more sophisticated, explanatory analyses. They should also seek to integrate researchers from other disciplines at UiT as well as international contacts into more collaborative work, in order to increase external funding and research quality.

UiT offers a BA in Political Science and an MA in Political Science. A PhD programme also exists, but it was not part of the evaluation. The KOMBEVAL report states that both programmes perform relatively well given the geographically isolated position of the university. The design of the programmes and the training of political science students are satisfactory, and the staff is qualified and connects research to teaching.

Nevertheless, the report also identifies room for improvements. For example, the department could do a better job in attracting more qualified students. Also, alternatives to completing the BA studies with a thesis should be specified and more methods teaching is recommended. Finally, the KOMBEVAL suggests to offer more courses in English and to do a more focused effort in terms of preparations for the labor market.

A comparison of the evaluations shows that political science education at UiT performs better than research. Although the positive evaluation of the study programmes is relative to difficult circumstances (geographical isolation), the difference in the quality of research and education appears to be substantial.

### 3.7.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The BA and MA programmes in political science are organizationally located within the Department of Social Sciences, which also offers other educational programmes within the social sciences. The department has its strengths within the areas of arctic governance, local democracy as well as organization and leadership where research groups exist. It is also worth noting that the department hosts a research group with a focus on quantitative methods. Outside of these focus areas the competencies within political science are relatively limited.

According to the self-assessment, teaching competencies are included in the hiring process and applicants are required to enclose a pedagogical portfolio with their application. Also, trial lectures are common but apparently not uniformly used when hiring academic staff. Notably, the university is in the course of developing a 'system of merit' that allows for better recognition of teaching skills among the faculty.

With respect to workload, the general principle is that academic staff members divide their time equally between teaching and research and development (besides the time allocated to administrative tasks). The allocation of time may vary from semester to semester, as a period with increased effort in, for example, teaching may be followed by a period with more time allocated to research.

#### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Teaching in the educational programmes within political science is mainly carried out by staff with academic qualifications, although the self-assessment estimates that 20 percent of teaching is done by staff without a PhD degree. With respect to the linkage between research and teaching, the SAMEVAL self-assessment discusses the challenges associated with enhancing students' outcome of teaching and points out that faculty face limited incentives to devote time to developing their teaching. This is, however, hardly unique to the University of Tromsø.

The BA programme in political science combines three semesters of mandatory courses covering the main sub-fields within political science with three semesters of electives. Overall, the link between the research interests of staff and the courses offered is by necessity less clear in the broad mandatory courses than in the electives. Most courses are nevertheless taught by faculty who are at least broadly speaking active researchers in the relevant field. Still, there are also examples of mandatory courses taught by staff who are not active researchers or have a very limited number of relevant research publications in the field. The electives offered seem to reflect partly the competencies of the department and partly an ambition to provide students with somewhat broad introductions to areas within political science.

Besides the EC dedicated to methods and the MA thesis, the MA programme in political science combines a limited component of mandatory courses focusing on substantive issues with room for electives. The set of electives at the MA level offered reflects the main research interest of the department although it also seems to be a priority that the electives are not overly specialized, with, for example, electives offered on decision-making theory and environmental politics.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

The BA programme in political science is not very focused on developing the research skills of students. The programme allocates 10 EC to a course on social science methods that combines insights into qualitative and quantitative methods. This course is evaluated by a written school exam, but during the semester students are able to improve and test their learning through different assignments. It is optional for students whether they want to finish their BA with a thesis amounting to 20 EC or rather take additional electives. For those students who choose to write a BA thesis, a seminar is organized and students will both receive teaching on writing a research paper and discuss their own and others work. Students who opt out of the BA thesis will on the other hand have limited experience with research methodology.

At the MA level, there is much more focus on the development of research skills. The programme allocates 20 EC to methods courses. The methods courses focus on qualitative and quantitative methods respectively and aim to equip students to be able to conduct their own research. In addition, students follow a 'project seminar' designed to equip them with the tools needed for writing an MA thesis.

As emphasized in the self-assessment, the MA thesis is particularly central to the acquisition of research skills as this allows students to go through the different stages of a research process. A total of 50 EC are allocated to the MA thesis. While the KOMBEVAL self-assessment underlines that the contributions of MA theses to the research universe is limited, the SAMEVAL self-assessment mentions the opportunity for students to apply for grants to participate in specific projects run by the research groups and presumably thus write their MA thesis in relation to this.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The material available for evaluating the degree of research orientation in teaching methods and assessment is limited. According to the self-assessment the overall goal of the programmes is not to develop researchers, as this is the aim of the PhD programme. Still, with an MA programme mainly dedicated to training in research methods and the writing of an MA thesis it is clear that the achievement of research skills is central to this programme.

At the BA level, the exam form in mandatory courses is often a written school exam, but some courses use other exam forms and it is also common to combine this with mandatory tasks during the semester. These may presumably serve the purpose of enhancing students' skills in for example academic argumentation.

In the responses to Studiebarometeret, the UiT students score lower than the national average when it comes to their achievement of 'knowledge of scientific work methods and research' and 'experience with research and development work'. While this is not particularly surprising at the BA level, where there is not a main focus on these issues, it is notable that MA students evaluate for example their insight in scientific work methods and research at 3.5, compared to a national average of 3.9.

#### Involvement in staff research

In a few cases, BA students have revised their BA thesis into a journal article in collaboration with their supervisor. A number of MA students receive research grants to participate in research projects, whereas others are involved as research assistants.

### 3.7.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

With some exceptions, the courses are taught by faculty who do research within the relevant fields, broadly understood, and most teaching is done by scholars with a PhD. However, the research is generally not assessed to be of the highest quality. Much of it is rather descriptive and not following state-of-the-art approaches in applied methods, which might be influencing the content of the methods training.

Nonetheless, the study programmes seem generally to be in good shape – and comparatively better off than the research quality. This lack of correspondence between educational performance and research quality, respectively, indicates that the careful organization of studies to some degree can substitute for excellence in research – as long as the teachers are at least active researchers.

Increased internationalization of research as well as educational programmes seem to be fruitful steps to make in order to support better interplay at UiT.

## 3.8 *Patterns across institutions*

The institutions included in the interplay evaluation differ in the scope of their research and teaching activities. Notably, only a few institutions are in a position where their research staff covers the full range of sub-disciplines within the field of political science. Most institutions have their main academic strengths within one or more subfields, rather than throughout the political science disciplines. These institutions have taken different decisions with respect to the educational programmes offered. At some places full-scale programmes in political science are still in place at the bachelor level, although the set of electives offered and the MA programmes may be narrower. Meanwhile, other institutions have chosen to offer programmes with a more limited focus, for example in the field of public administration. While the latter decision leads to programmes with a more narrow focus, it also ensures a better fit between the research and teaching conducted at the institutions.

It is also clear that the ambitions of BA and MA programmes differ particularly with regard to the emphasis put on research methodology. While the BA programmes are typically highly focused on substantive issues and generally rely more heavily on traditional exam formats, such as written desk exams, the MA programmes focus more on the development of research skills and often allocate a high number of EC to the MA thesis. Generally, this makes good sense because a basic foundation of knowledge and skills among the students need to be established first. Nonetheless, methods training tends to be somewhat under-prioritized at the BA level at most Norwegian universities offering degrees in the broad field of political science. It is also notable that only some institutions offer students the opportunity to achieve research skills at an advanced level through methods electives at the MA level.

Another education related aspect that deserves more attention is the value of seminar teaching. Some places make much use of this format; at other places this form of teaching tends to be underutilized for economic, traditional, or other reasons. In such seminars, researchers can utilize the teaching to dig into particular topics and get valuable input from discussions with the students. The students, on the other hand, get better opportunities to get actively involved in the classroom, which, to a higher degree than lectures, tend to stimulate their interest and support deep learning. This includes an improved understanding of the academic processes related to constructing novel, relevant, and feasible research questions, putting together an elaborate and consistent argument, and appraising theoretical propositions with the help of empirical data. These skills are obviously also developed through the writing of the BA thesis and the MA thesis, but many students could benefit from being exposed to and pursuing more small-scale research agendas.

Some departments have implemented novel ways to increase the interplay between research and education. They range from small grants for research, through participation in research group meetings and joint discussions of research proposals, to research oriented internships. Obviously, it would be good to facilitate some knowledge exchange about these initiatives so that both students and academic staff at other places can benefit from the experiences made.

Overall, the general trend with respect to the relative performance on education and research is that they tend to go hand in hand. In most cases we see that the quality of one dimension is more or less paralleled by a similar level of quality of the other dimension. There are a few exceptions and, somewhat surprisingly, some institutions tend to do comparatively better on education than research. This does not mean that it is not important to have active researchers being responsible for the teaching and supervision. However, it does indicate that careful development and execution of study

programmes to some extent can substitute for the lack of research quality. Moreover, the fact that all departments do at least as well in education as in research indicates that high quality education is not achieved at the expense of high quality research. This might be relevant information for discussions of the relative distribution of resources to universities and research institutes in Norway.

# 4 Sociology

## 4.1 *Nord University*

### 4.1.1 Comparison: research and education reports

Sociology at Nord University dates back to the 1970s, and today the Faculty of Social Sciences hosts a BA programme in sociology, a MA programme in social sciences, and a PhD programme in sociology. Sociology is taught at two campuses. Three research groups that involve sociologists were submitted for evaluation in SAMEVAL: Environment, Resource Management and Climate, Governance and Policy Development, and Welfare Research.

Income from external research grants is small, hindering a more expansive and developed research profile. Geographically remote, Nord University still plays an important role in generating knowledge relevant to the local environment, as well as to policy issues that matter for a sparsely populated region. The SAMEVAL sociology panel notes that productivity is just slightly below the Norwegian average but concludes that quality is not particularly strong (with reference to bibliometric analyses). The panel suggests that the institution should develop 'its more specialised research agenda to fit its specific circumstances'. Sociology at Nord University scores 2 in the assessment of research production and scientific quality (and the three research groups scored 3).

The KOMBEVAL panel concludes that there seem to be no promotion or recruitment activities for potential sociology students, which perhaps should be a priority, given the very small number of incoming students. Moreover, GPA is below the national average. The institution invests more in the higher degrees, providing a very good learning environment for MA and PhD students. Research is said to be a priority at Nord, and the self-assessment expresses an explicit sense that teaching is less important. The KOMBEVAL panel did not see any signs that this priority had a positive influence on programme designs. In fact, the panel concluded the opposite, and urged the institution to make a serious effort to raise the status of teaching. Moreover, the BA programme is so small that the KOMBEVAL panel deemed it to be unsustainable in the long run, recommending either distance learning or focusing on the MA level only.

An overall comparison shows a fair level of quality for both research and education, holding an acceptable, but moderate standard.

### 4.1.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

**Organizational conditions**

Sociology at Nord University is spread over two campuses (Bodø and Steinkjær). Staff are also located at a third campus. Travelling and expenses for travelling are challenging, but the distance between campuses also create an opportunity to develop digital teaching. Hiring decisions are preceded by trial lectures and proven teaching experience. All new lecturing staff are required to do a university pedagogical course.

The KOMBEVAL panel points to an unfortunate divide between research and teaching. This is evident in an explicit priority given to research in the self-assessment, as well as the fact that staff without PhD and mandatory research time do most of the teaching related tasks. It should be noted that the institution wants to express an ambition to balance what was previously a too heavy focus on education. Still, we would like to encourage the institution to make it a common goal to raise quality in both education and research simultaneously.

Academic staff with PhDs teach 55% or their time, whereas 45% is devoted to research and administrative tasks.

### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Almost all teachers at BA and MA level are listed researchers for the research evaluation. They are all associate professors (førsteamanuensis) or professors, but it is unclear to what degree they are involved in the courses. The self-assessment for KOMBEVAL refers to academic staff with no mandatory research (90% teaching), but we cannot find information on what courses they are assigned to.

Sociology at Nord University is taught with an effort to allocate academic staff to courses where there is opportunity 'to use their own research in teaching'. Related to the MA thesis course, the institution organizes a day to present faculty research. Also, the research profile of the institution – welfare research and climate and environmental research – is reflected in the streams running through both BA and MA programmes.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

As in most programmes, research abilities are primarily developed in the BA and MA thesis. At Nord, this is particularly the case at the MA level, where integration of MA students and their thesis work into the research environment is an explicit goal. From what we can see, Nord does a good job here and this is an aspect of the MA programme that they should value and develop further.

Out of 90 sociology credit points in the BA programme, only 10 credits are methods. The methods course is offered in the first year (ME118S), and it is an introduction to qualitative and quantitative methods. This is a general course offered to students from a range of social science BA programmes. It is taught as lectures, seminars, and labs. The BA thesis and methods course (SO2225S) encompasses 20 credits and is introduced as a small but independent piece of research, allowing for empirical and theoretical themes. This course is taught in the form of individual supervision and focuses on applying the specific method chosen for the thesis work. The examination of the course, including the BA thesis, emphasizes methodological aspects.

The MA programme offers a 10 credit course on social science analysis (SO313S), targeting methodology and research design in general, and leaning towards a qualitative and interpretive tradition. The MA programme also has 10+10 credits of methods courses. ME320S builds on the BA methods course (ME118S) and covers research design as well as practical skills in qualitative and quantitative methods. ME321S predominantly offers training in multivariate analysis, including assumptions about causality. This course also covers aspects of qualitative analysis, but focus appears to be on quantitative methods. If possible, an MA thesis (SO345S) should be linked to research at the faculty. It can take the form of an empirical study or a theoretical investigation, and it can be connected to the student's own professional practice. Combining a research focus with a practice focus is an interesting but challenging idea. The course description emphasizes connection to and reflection

on previous courses in the programme. The MA programme clearly aims at developing research abilities, not least by striving to embed MA theses into the research environment.

Sociology at Nord contributes a course in qualitative methods to the PhD programme in social science (SOS9002). We believe that a methods course at this level needs to cut down on the general and introductory aspects of qualitative methods (legacy, justification, critical review, etc.) in favour of a stronger focus on the actual analysis of qualitative data. From the course description, the current course does not appear to offer a satisfactory possibility for deeper studies. This might perhaps be because it has a broader audience than sociology.

#### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

As acknowledged in the self-assessment, there is currently little research orientation at the BA level beyond the methods courses. At the MA level, however, development of students' research abilities is a visible concern. MA students are occasionally invited to participate in and follow the seminars of research groups, and students are encouraged to link their MA thesis to ongoing research at the faculty. With only 3 answers from BA students and no answers from MA students, there are no reliable indications of students' perspectives on teaching methods.

#### Involvement in staff research

All PhD students are part of a research group. Thematic courses for PhD students are often initiated and run by the research groups. Nord University provides two examples of including master students in staff research: the presentation of faculty research prior to the student's choice of topic for his/her master thesis, and the practice of engaging master students as research assistants. Occasionally an MA student may be offered a master stipend linked to a research project.

### 4.1.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

In order for interplay between research and education to take place, it is most likely crucial to upgrade the status of teaching at Nord University. The self-assessment indicates that a too heavy focus on teaching in the past has since resulted in a more explicitly pursued research oriented agenda. Unfortunately, this seems to have occurred at the expense of teaching. Having said that, it should be mentioned that the MA programme clearly aims at developing research abilities. The panel commends the practice of a research day, where MA students are introduced to the research conducted at the institution, with the aim of embedding MA theses into the research environment. More thoughtful considerations could extend these ambitions to include the BA programme, too. Furthermore, as the KOMBEVAL panel emphasized, '...there are ways to embed research in teaching to raise its profile and reward among staff'.

## 4.2 *Norwegian University of Science and Technology*

### 4.2.1 Comparison: research and education reports

Sociology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) takes place within the Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences and the departments for Sociology and Political Science, and Education and Lifelong Learning (which houses the Centre for Child Research). The department for Sociology and Political Science offers three sociological study programmes: BA, MA and PhD degrees in sociology. NTNU has several research groups conducting sociological research, of which three were submitted for evaluation.

The SAMEVAL report notes that the sociology institution at NTNU arranges a number of incentives in order to promote research activity: focus groups, research support, generous sabbatical entitlements, etc. The researchers produce a diverse range of research of good quality. The SAMEVAL panel gives the score 3 for scientific quality and research production. The institution pays great attention to research-based education according to the idea that good researchers provide good teaching. The SAMEVAL panel commends activities that strive to strengthen the tie between teaching and research, for instance the Sociology Festival. PhD students are often involved in research groups and projects. SAMEVAL encouraged the institution to develop and carry through strategies that are adapted to the geographical setting, and perhaps to cultivate certain research areas in order to gain specific recognition for these (which would add to the strength of diverse research).

KOMBEVAL praises a lively and active learning environment at NTNU, along with the students' initial competence and teachers' innovative teaching and assessment methods, and concluded that, overall, NTNU offers a very good learning environment at all levels. The departmental emphasis on thorough application processes for study programmes, and the clear communication of expectations, are very good. However, KOMBEVAL notes a dissatisfaction with the student-staff environment reported in Studiebarometeret and sees room for improvement both with respect to promoting sociology to potential students, and in organizing introductory activities for sociology students. The BA programme has a satisfactory structure, but the panel remarked that the large component of electives may be creating challenges for a cumulative and integrated programme structure. The MA programme is strong on methods and theorising but does not leave a lot of room for methods specialization. KOMBEVAL recommends that internationalization should be a stronger focus in the sociology programmes, and NTNU should consider a research-orientated MA in English.

Overall, educational quality at NTNU has been found to be very good. While SAMEVAL was perhaps slightly less positive than KOMBEVAL, sociological research quality was found to be good to very good.

### 4.2.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The department strives for a balance between research and teaching along a 45/45/10 division of teaching, research, and administrative tasks. There are possibilities to reduce teaching time in order to work on research proposals, which is compensated for by hiring temporary staff. Decisions about hiring new staff are based on trial lectures, which are evaluated by both staff and students. New teachers are offered a university pedagogy course and are active in introducing new methods and

ideas. High quality of teaching is acknowledged through the Faculty's best teacher award (students' evaluation), and funding for new pedagogical initiatives and teaching methods.

### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

The self-assessment states that almost all teachers hold PhDs or have equivalent research qualifications, and all teachers also do research. Around 1/3 of the listed researchers for SAMEVAL are course leaders at the BA and MA programmes.

All study programmes (BA, MA, PhD) are linked to the department's research agenda, and the teachers often integrate their own research in teaching. The research groups are connected to the study programmes in various ways. This is particularly visible at MA and PhD levels, where specialized courses are given by the research groups (especially International Perspectives on Work and Welfare State, Social Inequalities in Health, and Social Interaction).

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

Out of 90 sociology credit points in the BA programme, 15 credits are methods. Students in the BA programme are introduced to qualitative and quantitative research methods already during the first year, which is very good. The second and third year leaves (perhaps too) much room for individual choices. However, there seems to be no possibility for students to specialize within research methods. The final year includes a mandatory course on research design (SOS2000) that is a preparation for the BA thesis. Ideally, the BA thesis should be on a topic related to the elective specialization course in the final semester, which implies that this semester is completely focused around the BA thesis. The thesis appears to focus on research skills, requiring that the student should demonstrate the capacity to independently complete and present a piece of research.

The MA programme has a strong focus on methods, with a total of 15+15 credits of qualitative (SOS3007) and statistical (SOS3003) research methods, offering a solid basis for multivariate analysis. Students interested in further developing their methods skills can opt for an additional 15 credits of advanced statistical methods (SOS3515) as a specialization. On top of the methods courses, the MA programme contains a 7.5 credit course in research design (SOS3006) that emphasizes both creative and critical perspectives on research design. Similar to the programme design around the BA thesis, the MA thesis should ideally relate to the theme of the student’s specialization course. The MA thesis is a strict research report emphasizing independence, data collection and analysis, as well as research ethics.

Some further methods training is available for PhD students. A course in the theory of science (SFEL8000) is targeted specifically at the social sciences and offers a component tailored to the student’s own PhD project. It is not clear, however, how and to what extent the PhD courses in applied social statistics (SOS8003) and qualitative methods (SOS9007) advance the training that is offered at the MA level. The fact that the former has a focus on OLS-regression suggests that the department might consider offering more diverse methods training.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

All methods and research design courses have a strong focus on assessing research abilities, ranging from analysis, evaluation, and written and oral presentations. The KOMBEVAL panel noted that NTNU used a variety of assessment methods across the BA and MA levels.

Studiebarometeret indicates that the students at the BA level are more exposed to seminars and written assignments than the national average. Students at the MA level have considerably more project work than the national average. We take the focus on project work and written assignments to be beneficial for developing students' research abilities. However, as noted by the KOMBEVAL panel, both BA and MA students report less satisfaction with 'Knowledge of scientific work methods and research' and 'Experience with research and development work' than the national average. This is clearly at odds with the impression that we have from looking at the programme design and the methods and thesis courses. The institution should investigate this mismatch.

#### Involvement in staff research

The institution points to some difficulties in involving students in research, namely specialized research and too advanced techniques in quantitative methods.

Students are mostly involved in research through their MA theses when they choose a topic related to their supervisors' research or as part of a larger project. For example, students may be entrusted with previously collected material for analysing anew. Some MA students are also recruited as research assistants by staff members to their projects. At times, when results turn out to be interesting, the MA student is invited to publish together with staff members.

The sociology staff at NTNU also offers some innovative ideas for student-staff collaboration, such as the Sociological Polyclinic, founded and organized by Professor Aksel Tjora (since 2014). Its members are BA, MA, and PhD students, as well as researchers from NTNU, and the task is to 'develop, uphold and supply meaningful sociology' (according to the web page www.sospol.no). Another initiative is the annual daylong Sociology Festival, where staff and students discuss and debate sociological research and topics. A few selected master students are invited to present their master theses at the festival.

### 4.2.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

SAMEVAL found sociology research quality at NTNU to have a good standard and KOMBEVAL was very positive about the quality of education. In our view, NTNU stands out as particularly ambitious and inventive when it comes to the interplay between research and education. The fact that all educational programmes appear to be well-aligned with the research agenda forms a very good basis for interplay. A strong orientation towards research-based BA and MA theses and an insistence on methods training further foster students' research capacity. In addition, both the sociology festival and the sociological polyclinic appear to be genuine arenas for interaction between academic staff and students, which push beyond the traditional seminar or master-apprentice setup.

## 4.3 *University College of South-Eastern Norway* [4]

### 4.3.1 Comparison: research and education reports

Sociology at University College of South-Eastern Norway (HSN) is found on the campus in Vestfold, organized under the Business School. Sociology has been taught since the early 1990s, and the bachelor programme was established around 15 years ago. A master programme in Social Sciences makes further studies possible for sociology students. There is no PhD programme. There are several research groups at the Business School, but all sociologists at NSU belong to the multidisciplinary research group Social Sustainability that targets several sub-topics, among which sociologists are active in Political Communication, Social Recruitment and Reproduction, and Economic Organization.

The SAMEVAL panel points to considerable challenges for sociology at HSN concerning the prospect of developing significant impact on international sociological research and scholarship. Resources are limited, both in terms of time and money, which may explain the rather modest publication rate at the institution. Furthermore, the absence of a PhD programme adds to the limitations of the development of sociology at HSN. The productivity rate is modest and the contributions to the field of sociology are rather limited, according to the SAMEVAL panel. The group of sociologists is described as a small and comparatively diverse group of scholars, which makes it important to set reasonable goals. To enhance the international reputation the panel recommends concentrating on publishing journal articles, establishing post-doc positions, and collaborating with other institutions on larger research projects. The SAMEVAL panel assessed sociological research production and scientific quality at the institution with the lowest score (1), and the research group Social Sustainability was given a score of 2.

KOMBEVAL finds evidence of a lively and active learning environment at HSN, with an introductory programme for incoming students. Accordingly, student satisfaction scores are high. The institution uses many strategies for promoting the interest of potential students in noteworthy ways. Student satisfaction is also high regarding training in innovative thinking, which may be an area to exploit and develop further. The sociology programmes are noted by the KOMBEVAL panel for the high value placed on educational competence, although innovation in teaching is suggested as an area for development. They also suggest a more extensive coverage of contemporary sociological theories and results, as well as a stronger integration between theory and research methods. The KOMBEVAL panel raises serious concerns about the reported self-study hours, which are half of what has been found at some other institutions. They suggest that the workload for students is increased.

An overall comparison between sociological research and education at the University College of South-Eastern Norway is that education holds a higher standard than research.

[4] In May 2018 the institution obtained university status and is now called University of South-Eastern Norway. This assessment refers to University College of South-Eastern Norway (HSN), given that this was the institutional context in which the assessment was conducted.

### 4.3.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The institution describes a difficult but successful period of time for developing the sociology programmes. In accordance with the evaluation scores (SAMEVAL and KOMBEVAL), and the self-assessment, this is an institution where education has been given priority over research during its construction phase. Today, the percentage of teaching amounts to 65%, or in some cases less than 50%, with an administrative burden of 15%.

According to the self-assessment, the status of being a good teacher is high among the sociologists, and the institution puts great emphasis on educational competence. This is reflected in the ambition to start working systematically with teaching merit systems, and involving peers more in the academic programmes. HSN has a specialized department of education quality, with a teaching and learning centre that gives organizations support for effective teaching. Staff members are offered three courses in 'Teaching in professional education', each worth ten credits. The courses are mandatory for new employees with teaching duties.

Hiring procedures are characterized by a great emphasis on educational competence: previous experience from teaching and supervision of students is required. Potential new staff members have to give a trial lecture, which is discussed and reviewed before the hiring decisions.

#### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

All of the listed researchers for SAMEVAL, teach at bachelor or master level (or both) at HSN. Almost all members of the academic staff (7/8) have PhDs or equivalent research qualifications. One PhD student (Høgskolelektor) is responsible for the methodology course at BA level (according to the homepage). It seems unfortunate to give the methodology course to staff with the least research experience.

Researchers are assigned to teach courses of particular relevance to their research field. In particular, courses at MA level are given priority to match teaching topics with research expertise. The greatest challenge, though, put forward by the institution, is to ensure research-based education in all areas of a BA in Sociology, given the small research group.

#### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

Out of 90 sociology credit points in the BA programme, 15 credits are methods. The BA programme can be considered a fairly standard sociology programme, offering a general introduction to research methods. A course on sociological perspectives and analysis (SO-SPA2200) explicitly strives to connect methodological approaches to sociological perspectives. This is not a bad idea, but a more productive approach would be to build such a component into all subject courses. The core methods training is done in the 2nd semester 15 credit-course on sociological methods and analysis (SO-MET1100), which is an introduction to quantitative and qualitative research methods. The BA thesis, like the BA programme overall, aims primarily at developing students' general academic skills. The students have the option to collect their own data, but this is neither required nor emphasized. Still, the self-assessment suggests that many students do collect their own data for the BA thesis, which can be written independently or in pairs.

The transdisciplinary social science MA programme contains a 15-credit mandatory course in the philosophy of science (SA-VIT4001) that provides a broad introduction to the literature. The 15-credit methods course (SA-MET4101) appears to focus primarily on students' capacity to critically evaluate methodological choices across a wide range of approaches, and secondarily on developing students' hands-on research skills. A mandatory 7.5-credit course on research design (SA-FOR4203) takes a similar approach. We believe the methods training at the MA level is below the threshold for students to be able to develop their sociological research abilities. Work on the MA thesis starts with a separate mandatory preparatory course (SA-OPF4201) that aims to put the students on track. The MA thesis itself is an independent piece of work that requires sound design and research craft. The institution puts equal emphasis on critical reflection and general academic skills, and specific research abilities. Students are invited to do their thesis in collaboration with local organizations and companies, which is a very nice way to increase the relevance of the thesis work. At the same time, it also puts higher demands on students' independent research capacity and integrity, and on supervision. It is not entirely clear how this is addressed.

#### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

Teaching and methods follow the national norm with a strong reliance on a mix of lectures and seminars. Studiebarometeret also suggest that written assignments and group work without teacher are used more than the national average. The self-assessment states that all courses have a focus on reading, assessing, and critiquing scientific text, suggesting a consistent emphasis on academic skills such as critical reflection and analysis. The BA thesis is said to be modelled on a scientific article, but given the relatively weak methods component of the BA programme, this is perhaps mostly a vision?

#### Involvement in staff research

There is no PhD training in sociology at HSN, but some sociologists supervise PhD candidates at other departments, and they have developed a PhD course in Sociology of Education. Efforts are made to 'broaden' the PhD education, perhaps leading to a more attractive option for sociology students and students of the interdisciplinary master in social science.

Although MA students are invited to join research groups, it is not a common habit. In relation to a specific social welfare policy project, MA students were recruited to write master theses on the topic. There is an increasing effort to also encourage BA students to find topics for their theses within the academic staff's existing research areas.

### 4.3.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

The institution points to an awareness of the value of using research in teaching at both BA and MA levels, and points to difficulties in providing research-based education in all areas. The idea of interplay between education and research seems to be rather narrowly defined as a match between course themes and the teachers' research fields or experience. There is an explicit effort to link master students' work on their theses to current research projects.

The prospect of developing a strong relationship between education and sociological research is highly dependent on a prosperous research environment. Whereas education at HSN is of a rather good standard, the quality of research lags behind. A rise in research quality would most likely contribute to the development of sociological education in general, and to the interplay aspects in particular.

## 4.4 *University of Agder*

### 4.4.1 Comparison: research and education reports

Sociology at the University of Agder (UiA) is found at the Department of Sociology and Social Work. The educational set-up consists of a BA programme in sociology, and a joint MA programme in sociology and social work, where the two subjects are offered as specializations. This interdisciplinary profile is described as successful, as it attracts many students. Research activities at the faculty are organized in research groups, and the department submitted two groups for the evaluation: Service Development (social work oriented) and Cultural Sociology.

The submitted material for evaluation of research came from both research groups, which may explain why the sociological contributions were not always clear and distinct. The SAMEVAL panel concluded that the institution has a fair publication rate and similar impact figures in comparison to the national average. According to the panel, research production and scientific quality at the institution earn the score 3. It suggests that the department should strive to attract applicants for future associate/full professor positions outside Norway in order to gain a competitive selection of applicants. The SAMEVAL panel also recommends expanding the publication culture to include more English language journal articles to balance the previous dominance of book chapters in Norwegian. More external funding would also help improve research quality.

The KOMBEVAL panel commends a lively learning environment at the University of Agder, partly thanks to an active student association. The panel particularly points to the Eilert Sundt Award – a competition for high school students – as an excellent example of promoting sociology to potential future students. However, they also raise concerns regarding a rather weak BA programme, in which close educational links to social work might take place at the expense of sociological theory and research methodology. Furthermore, the panel expressed surprise at the fact that the department holds an encouraging attitude towards students who combine work with full-time study. The KOMBEVAL panel suggests an increasing amount of research methods training in the BA programme, as well as more contemporary social theories.

An overall comparison between sociological research and education at the University of Agder is that both activities are performed with good results.

### 4.4.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

In the self-assessment, it is stated that the distribution of working hours differs between active researchers and assistant professors. Whereas the former divide their time between 40% research, 50% teaching, and 10% administration, the latter have a 10/80/10 distribution. The size of each group is unclear.

Teaching qualifications and teamwork skills are emphasized in recruitment. Prior to hiring decisions, applicants on the shortlist are asked to hold a trial lecture. Applicants ‘who lack formal teaching qualifications will be required to obtain such qualifications’. It is unclear whether this lack of formal teaching qualifications refers to actual experience in teaching. New academic staff are supposed to take the course Education for University Lecturers within two-three years’ time. Besides this, there are

several seminars, courses and workshops for staff who want to engage in pedagogical development. The University of Agder plans to introduce a pedagogical qualification system.

### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Almost all teachers at BA and MA level are listed as active researchers for the SAMEVAL evaluation. Almost all teachers are also PhDs (or equivalent) at the BA programme, as are 100% of the teachers at MA level. Only 10% of the teachers at BA level have positions that do not include mandatory research time.

Research results generated by researchers at the institution are continually used in teaching, although not entirely. There are a couple of courses partly based on staff research (Multicultural Societies, Cross Discipline and Inter Organizational Collaboration, as well as methodology courses). The two research groups that are submitted to SAMEVAL: Service Development and Cultural Sociology, are both linked to the study programmes. The institution sees no challenges in providing an education where research and education interplay, simply by concluding that staff research is relevant for the course contents.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

Out of 90 sociology credit points in the BA programme, 20 credits are methods. The KOMBEVAL panel found the BA programme to be somewhat lacking in sociological depth and coherence. The 5th semester includes two 10 credit introductory methods courses. The practical research course (ME-110-1) introduces different forms of data and types of analyses, while the methods course (ME-100-1) also includes some hand-on training in analysis. While the first of these courses is specific to the sociology and social work programmes, the second one is a general course included in several different social science programmes. Both appear to be fairly elementary. The BA thesis is a 20-credit independent investigation of a sociological problem that can be based on theoretical literature, previous research or the student's own empirical analysis.

The MA programme contains two 10 credit courses in methods, both of which intertwines qualitative (ME-416-1) and quantitative (ME-417-1) methods training with philosophy of science. While both courses address important conceptual issues, it is questionable if these two courses provide enough qualified hands-on training in sociological research methods. The MA thesis is a 60 credit specialization in sociology aiming to demonstrate the student's theoretical, analytical, and methodological competence. It can be written in pairs.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The self-assessment is silent as to how a research orientation is reflected in teaching methods and assessment. The KOMBEVAL panel asked both for more variety and for deeper reflection in the institution's narrative about teaching. Studiebarometeret suggests an unusually low reliance on seminars and an unusually high reliance on group work without teacher in the BA programme. The use of project work is also above the national average. Interpreted in positive terms, this should leave ample room for students to develop independent problem solving. However, there could also be a risk that such problem solving might be performed without research intuition. In terms of achieved learning, students at UiA report dissatisfaction with their 'knowledge of scientific work methods and research' and 'experience with research and development work'. However, the response rate for UiA is very low, so these figures should be treated with caution.

### Involvement in staff research

PhD students are expected to participate in one of the available research groups. At the time of the self-assessment, only one PhD student was involved with a larger research project at the department.

There are no systematic routines for involving students in research, but increasingly MA students are involved. The self-assessment states that students are encouraged to participate in the research groups, but how this is accomplished is not clear. There is a grant scheme at the university level for student participation in research projects that staff can apply for.

## 4.4.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

The combination of social work and sociology at the department seems to be successful in terms of attracting students. At the same time, this arrangement may possibly occur at the expense of high quality sociological education.

The institution encourages students to engage in research projects, and the university offers funding for such participation (applied for by staff). This practice is noteworthy. The institution also stresses the use of empirical research produced by academic staff in teaching, particularly in methodology classes, which is a good thing.

A more complex notion of interplay would be beneficial. The conclusion that appeals for interplay are met by a match between staff's research and the content of courses, seems to be a naive assumption. For instance, data show a low reliance on seminars (although the response rate is very low), which could be an area for improvement in order to strengthen the relationship between research and education. Having said this, the results of both KOMBEVAL and SAMEVAL suggest that sociology at the University of Agder has the capacity to develop interplay dimensions even further.

## 4.5 *University of Bergen*

### 4.5.1 Comparison: research and education reports

The University of Bergen (UiB) houses a successful sociology department, which is among the top five sociology institutions in Norway, according to the SAMEVAL panel. Their ways of encouraging free scientific dialogue, and making sure permanent staff are involved in research activities, are working well. The publication rate is good, as is the choice of journals. External funding is also at a good level. The department of Sociology offers BA and MA programmes in sociology, and the department also contributes courses to the PhD programme in social sciences, however none of these courses are considered in this report.

The SAMEVAL panel notes that the institution identifies a challenge in giving teaching as much priority as research. They suggest a development of better institutional incentives in order to enhance interplay between research and teaching. The SAMEVAL panel points out the next goals for the institution: more external funding (particularly international), publications in top journals, and linking research to teaching, preferably by integrating thesis writing with research groups and projects.

The KOMBEVAL panel notes the BA programme's specific attention to the coherence between courses. In comparison to some other sociology programmes, this programme avoids being fragmented through a collection of stand-alone courses. KOMBEVAL finds the lower scores from BA students on experience with research and development work, and discipline and profession specific skills, particularly noteworthy. For sociology MA students at UiB, on the other hand, scores in Studiebarometeret are above the national average with only one exception ('oral communication skills'). The department appears to do a very good job with the MA programme. KOMBEVAL finds it interesting that despite a focus on enhancing teaching quality, a tension is still visible between the agendas of teaching and research, which means that staff find it more difficult to prioritize teaching innovation and invest in the teaching side of their job. Research-led teaching innovations might form a valuable focus in casting these agendas in more complimentary ways.

KOMBEVAL praised UiB's intention to reduce the focus on history/theory in the BA programme in favour of sociological analysis and contemporary problems. The KOMBEVAL panel suggested that more research methods training be introduced, to embed methodology within substantive courses, and that more combined theory-empirics courses be developed. Particularly for the BA programme, the department should improve opportunities for research and development work. The teaching materials also tend to focus heavily on Norway (in terms of topics and authors), and a more international perspective is recommended. However, the panel believes that there is room to improve the connection between teaching and research, and suggests that, in future, special attention be paid to also stimulate researcher-led teaching innovations.

Overall, the panels found both research and educational quality at UiB to be very high.

### 4.5.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The division between research and teaching for UiB permanent positions is 46/46 with 8% administrative tasks. PhD candidates and post-docs teach around an average of 25%, spread out over a

longer period of time. Teaching staff are both permanently and temporarily employed. MA students are engaged as teaching assistants at the BA level. Trial lectures and proven experience of teaching are obligatory ingredients in the hiring process. A programme for university teaching is mandatory for new staff.

The faculty and university take different measures to improve the quality of teaching, as well as the status of teaching. For example, there is a 'quality of teaching award' at the faculty, and an Excellent Teaching Practitioner programme is tested at UiB, and will possibly be adopted throughout the organization after evaluation. There are grants available for developing teaching and assessment methods, but educational competence seems hard to prioritize when expectations of research achievements are high. The self-evaluation stresses the fact that the present incentive system is more concentrated on research than teaching and the development of new pedagogical activities and assessment methods.

### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

A third of the listed researchers for SAMEVAL are listed as course leaders at the BA and MA programmes. All course leaders are active researchers, PhDs or above (except for one, as far as we can tell), but occasional lectures are held by PhD candidates.

All eligible courses at BA and MA level are directly linked to one of three research groups (or rather, research fields or areas) that are submitted to SAMEVAL: Welfare, Inequality and Life Course (VUL), Work, Knowledge, Education and Economy (AKUØ), and Migration, Development and Environment (MUM). There seems to be no involvement of students in the running of research projects, except for occasional master theses. We note a considerable leap between the bachelor thesis and the master thesis. Whereas the former involves rather modest skills (emphasising the development of a research design more than implementation of it), the master thesis comprises far more advanced skills (independent research).

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

Out of 90 sociology credit points in the BA programme, 15 credits are a methods course, either in the 2nd or 3rd semester, which is an introduction to both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This course is not specific to sociology, but is included in a range of programmes in the social sciences. In all, the BA programme does not focus specifically on preparing the student's research abilities. The 15 credit BA thesis shall give the student the opportunity to independently analyse a sociological problem on the basis of existing literature. It is possible, but optional, to base the thesis on an empirical analysis of primary or secondary data.

The MA programme contains 60 credits worth of courses, of which 10+10 credits are quantitative (SOS303) and qualitative (SOS304) methods. Both courses are standard in terms of content and set ambitious learning outcomes that emphasize research skills. In addition, a 10-credit course on sociological analysis (SOS301) focuses specifically on the connection between theory, data, and analysis. With the 60 credit MA thesis, students are given the explicit task of producing an independent piece of research. The learning outcomes for the MA thesis emphasize research ability.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The KOMBEVAL panel was highly appreciative of the teaching methods at UiB. The general view of assessment across courses is to encourage and reward reflective and argumentative skills in students' written work. BA students are encouraged to have the BA thesis mimic a research paper in style (but

note reservations above). MA theses are considered to be independent research products and are assessed accordingly. Studiebarometeret indicates that BA students have much more teaching in seminar form than the national average, and that they have less group work without teacher. Also according to Studiebarometeret, MA students have more project work and use more digital work methods than the national average. Both BA and MA students follow the national average in satisfaction with learning outcomes related to research and scientific methods.

#### Involvement in staff research

Externally funded PhD students are linked to the institution's various research areas, but basically the education of PhD students are characterized by courses, seminars and supervision (internal and/or external). BA and MA students are not involved in the institution's research, but are encouraged to choose a topic close to the given research areas. Master theses are given significantly higher status, since they are registered in the CRIStin system, and thus considered part of the total amount of research undertaken at the institution.

### 4.5.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

Research and teaching in sociology at UiB is of high quality. With respect to the interplay, we note the tension between research and teaching at the level of the teacher, which leads to the prioritizing of research. While this tension is not necessarily a problem for the interplay between research and education, at such an institution it is important to safeguard incentives for contributing to the development of teaching. UiB offers grants for developing teaching and assessment methods, and should make sure to encourage teacher-led contributions in those initiatives.

In relation to the educational programmes, UiB puts little emphasis on research abilities in the BA programme, with relatively few methods courses – that are not sociology specific – and what appears to be a small and relatively ‘light’ BA thesis. The MA programme appears to be heavily research oriented, with a decent methods component and a clear research orientation in the MA thesis. However, we do believe that the connection to UiB research areas in the elective courses is a fine way of ensuring some interplay. For an institution with a strong research environment, this appears to be a reasonable way to achieve interplay at the BA level. Still, it is also our perception that UiB could easily improve other aspects of interplay, firstly by re-orienting its teaching materials towards a more international perspective, and secondly by considering different ways to involve students in research practices.

## 4.6 *University of Oslo*

### 4.6.1 Comparison: research and education reports

The sociology department at the University of Oslo (UiO) receives top scores in the research evaluation SAMEVAL and is described as leaders of the Norwegian sociology community. Out of 23 institutions, the department is among the only two that received the top score of five. KOMBEVAL finds that UiO sociology programmes (BA, MA, PhD) provide teaching of high quality and that the institution attracts students who are amongst the strongest in Norway.

Research productivity is high and made visible in highly ranked journals. The SAMEVAL report points out that the sociological research covers a wide range of themes across the full methodological spectrum. Since a previous evaluation in 2010, measures have been taken to develop skills in general sociological theory and methodology, as well as to improve national and international collaboration. The SAMEVAL sociology panel recognizes these efforts as successful. The department has also successfully strived to build an academic environment that includes PhD students more, but is still encouraged to find more inclusive strategies concerning the external PhD students.

UiO provides a very good range of introduction and students support activities. However, KOMBEVAL thinks that research methods courses come too late in the programme, and argues that students would benefit from research methods training earlier, and that methods and techniques are best integrated into the substantive courses. The KOMBEVAL panel also thinks there is some room for improvement in terms of updating the course materials and topics, which tend to focus on Norway, and Norwegian authors. A more international outlook in teaching materials and topics is recommended. KOMBEVAL suggests that the design of the BA sociology programme would benefit from revisions to increase the amount of research methods training and to bring it into the programme at an earlier stage. The content of teaching could also be more contemporary in orientation. One significant issue is that the programme design did not appear to reflect the research of the department, and the panel suggests that a strategy around research-led teaching could improve the distinctive features of studying sociology at UiO.

Overall, research and educational quality at the University of Oslo has been found to be very good.

### 4.6.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The department strives for a balance between research and teaching along the ratio of 47% research, 47% teaching and 6% administration. For PhD fellows the ratio is 75/25%, although in practice the research part is larger.

The self-assessment reports that there is a plan for developing university pedagogical skills, particularly for new employees (100 hours within two years). For more experienced staff, there is no explicit development path, apart from general encouragements to participate in pedagogical discussions and seminars. An overall interest among permanent staff to take part in shorter pedagogical seminars, etc. is reported.

Hiring decisions put greater emphasis on scientific competence than pedagogical, which has its background in the large number of scientifically competent applicants from research institutes where teaching is not part of ordinary work. Such new staff is supported in acquiring pedagogical training.

### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Teachers are all active researchers according to the self-assessment for SAMEVAL. Permanent staff have PhD degrees 'or equivalent' and research time is mandatory in all teacher positions. Only a few seminar tutors do not have mandatory research time. The self-assessment for KOMBEVAL gives more details on these matters. More than 50% of the teaching staff at the bachelor programme demonstrate a research competence at the level of PhD as a minimum. At the master programme the percentage is almost 90. The share of teachers at the bachelor programme who do not hold positions that include mandatory research is a little less than 50% (around 20% at master level).

More than half of the listed researchers for SAMEVAL teach at BA or MA level (or both). The panel notes that particularly the methodology courses seem to have the most teachers who are not listed as active researchers, or have less research experience (PhD candidates).

Courses at all levels are 'research-based'. Academic staff applying for external funding are encouraged to develop teaching-related activities (e.g. PhD courses or MA stipends). The aim is to provide structures for incorporating teaching related activities as integrated parts of larger research projects. The department asks for a greater appreciation of these efforts from the NRC, suggesting it should be explicitly evaluated. Two research groups are connected to the study programmes at all levels: Social Inequality and Population Dynamics, and Social Marginalization, Substance Use and Crime. When consulting the overview of study programmes, it is hard to see how the latter research group is involved in teaching at MA and PhD level.

KOMBEVAL remarks that the BA programme design as a whole does not seem to reflect the department's research. However, the selection of thematic courses is developed to reflect the research activities of the staff. At the MA level, for example, a course is led by the head of a research group with corresponding theme, and furthermore, students are encouraged to pursue their MA research within the theme.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

Out of 90 sociology credit points in the BA programme, 20 credits are methods. Students are mandated to take 10 credits in qualitative methods in the 2nd semester, 10 credits of quantitative methods in the 4th semester, and 10 credits research methodology in the final semester as preparation for the BA thesis. While the BA programme has more methods training than most other national programmes in sociology, the MA programme seems to aim solely for developing research abilities. Apart from the MA thesis, half of the credits are methods and methodology and the thesis itself puts a strong emphasize on research skills.

Qualitative methods emphasize both collection and analysis with a degree of good progression from undergraduate (SVMET1010) to graduate (SOS4010) level. In contrast, quantitative methods at undergraduate level (SOS1120) is fairly rudimentary and seems to focus more on an intuition about strengths and weaknesses rather than developing strong analytical skills. It is unclear to us what quantitative methods training is offered at the MA level. 20 credits of methods courses at the BA level is high by Norwegian standards, but is still not enough to offer students a chance to develop strong methods skills prior the MA level. Research methodology and design (SOS3050) offers a good

coverage of the academic skills that are necessary to pursue a BA thesis. A similar course (SOS4050) at the MA level offers a similar preparation for the MA thesis, although in more depth, and some specialization depending on the preferred choice of method for the thesis project.

The BA thesis is worth 10 credits. It is designed to be completed in the final semester, and the methods pre-requisites are defined accordingly. The learning outcomes clearly emphasize both sociology specific and generic research-based skills, and the examination includes an oral defence. The MA thesis is a significant undertaking worth 60 credits, explicitly meant to be an independent piece of academic sociological research. The prerequisites include theory, methods, and methodology. MA students receive significant supervision and during the course students are mandated to present their own thesis work in two seminars, and to twice serve as commentator/opponent on a peer's thesis.

UiO has a three-year PhD programme in sociology that is structured around the mandatory introductory, mid-stage, and submission seminars where students' work is presented and discussed. Most courses are electives, but besides the seminars, students are required to take courses in philosophy and methodology of the social sciences, and in research ethics. Out of 21 elective credits, at least 5 has to be on methods, implying that only 5 of 30 credits courses at the PhD level are methods. UiO offers two 5 credit methods courses at the PhD level. Advanced statistical methods (SGO9009) furthers quantitative skills acquired at the MA level and the content varies depending on student demand. Qualitative research methods and analysis (SOS9008) has a similar student driven design with a clear aim of extending previous skills.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The department reports ongoing reform and reorientation in terms of assessment methods. As it stands, they are conventional. At face value so are the teaching methods, with a traditional mix of lectures and seminars. However, the department reports a willingness on behalf of teaching staff to develop and vary the teaching methods. Clearly more can be done, and the department is aware that this is an area for improvement.

The conventional setup is largely confirmed by answers to Studiebarometeret, which overall suggest that UiO is similar to Norway at large as far as teaching and assessment methods go. However, it seems that at the BA level the use of seminars is more common than on average and that group work without teacher and the use of project work is less common. Project work is also less common than average at the MA level. There is also a slight tendency to use more written assignments at the BA level and less teacher lead group work at both the BA and MA levels. BA students are slightly more satisfied with their achieved 'knowledge of scientific work methods and research' than the national average.

### Involvement in staff research

The department involves some students in staff research in the capacity as research assistants who carry out specific tasks in a project. MA scholarships may be awarded by some projects to students who write their theses on the same theme. A small number of the PhD students (2-4 candidates out of around 50) are financed as PhD fellowships by externally funded projects and are closely involved in larger projects at the department.

### 4.6.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

The high quality research conducted at the sociology department provides a solid ground for high levels of interplay between education and research. It is likely that students and PhD students will find a vivid academic environment with a developed seminar culture, multiplicity of themes and methodology, international scholars as guest researchers and collaborating partners, etc. Such a research environment is likely to benefit all students at a department, and particularly so if they are invited, and at higher levels, expected, to participate.

When assessing whether the strong research at UiO is actually reflected in the programmes, SAMEVAL and KOMBEVAL comes to partly different conclusions. While SAMEVAL praises the (conventional) way of letting strong research influence thematic courses, KOMBEVAL would like the whole programmes to better reflect the research strengths of the department.

There are other sociology environments in Norway that also offer high quality sociology education, but when it comes to consistent research quality, UiO is the national leader. Thus sociology at UiO is a very strong environment and we believe that it has what it takes to depart from the national sociology curricula and let research influence its educational programmes at the core.

## 4.7 *University of Stavanger*

### 4.7.1 Comparison: research and education reports

Sociology at the University of Stavanger (UiS) is found in two multidisciplinary departments at the faculty of social sciences: Media Culture & Social Sciences and Social studies. The educational programmes are rooted in several disciplines and offers specializations with a more vocational orientation within leadership, organizational topics and in societal safety. A one-year course and a BA degree in sociology is offered, but there is no strict sociological MA programme, where most research input into teaching might be expected. Some MA students write their theses supervised by sociologists. Societal safety is one of the strategic focus area of the faculty, and this is also the topic which organizes around 40 researchers in the research group Societal Safety and Risk.

The organization of multidisciplinary research in RAPs (Research Area Programmes), is cherished by the SAMEVAL panel, and they welcome the future plans for recruitments of PhD students and post-docs in sociology. They also raise some concerns regarding risks of a fragmented or watered down sociological discipline. The institution is recommended to facilitate for sociologists at the University of Stavanger to come together in order to create a stronger status for sociology and, ultimately, to increase productivity and develop high quality sociological research. The SAMEVAL panel concludes that the status of sociology does not seem to be very strong at the faculty. Despite several incentives to enhance scientific output (such as mentoring, individual bonuses, scholarships, coaching, etc.), publication points per researcher is very low in comparison to other Norwegian universities. The SAMEVAL panel assessed research production and scientific quality to be of an acceptable, but moderate standard, with few original contributions to the field internationally (score 2).

The KOMBEVAL panel concludes that the educational programmes at the institution are well run, and appreciates an effort to stress the value of teaching. It is noted that the emphasis on human relations, HRM, social security, and risk management, may be the reason why students are more positive than average to the prospect for the sociology programme to prepare them for future careers. This is a potential area of strength, and the panel urges the institution to further stress the relevance of the programme. KOMBEVAL points out that diversifying teaching and learning methods is an area for development and suggests that methodology courses be placed earlier in the programme. They also raise concerns regarding less reported self-study hours per week than a national average and propose to increase the student workload.

An overall comparison between sociological research and education at the University of Stavanger is that education holds a slightly higher standard than research.

### 4.7.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

Academic staff spend 40% of their time on research, 50% on teaching and 10% on administration. In the self-assessment it is stated that teaching already has a high status at the university, and several incentives work to keep it that way. For example, teachers can apply for funding from the faculty for

projects aiming to develop teaching methods. There is also a Learning Environment Committee at university level, which funds special projects on better learning environment, and issues a yearly award for good learning environments. Also, for academic promotion documented pedagogical and didactic skills are necessary.

The University of Stavanger has a department for developing digital learning tools (NETTOP-UiS) with the aim of providing and promoting the use of such tools. Whether this is an opportunity that is taken advantage of for the teaching of sociology is unclear.

Applicants for permanent positions are required to have basic teaching skills. Those who cannot certify such skills may still be employed, but with the condition that they gain these skills within two years. It is unclear precisely what competence is required, apart from courses (?) at the university pedagogical learning centre, Uniped. All hiring decisions are preceded by trial lectures. PhD students are admitted to a PhD programme in social sciences, with a specialization in sociology. They are funded by the faculty or by external research funding.

### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Thirty researchers are listed for the SAMEVAL assessment, slightly more than a third of these researchers seem to be involved in the institution's courses. Around 85% of the teaching was conducted by academic staff with PhDs. Around 20% of the teaching was carried out by staff without mandatory research time, or by guest lecturers from outside the institution (from other faculties, or the private sector).

The research areas at the institution are integrated in all study programmes at BA level, according to the self-assessment, but it is not clear in what particular way this is accomplished. It is stated that the research group Societal Safety and Risk, together with a research group in political science, is tied to the BA programme. According to the institution's descriptions, ‘research-based education’ primarily seems to mean research through teachers’ presentations of their own research, as well as the introduction to research methods.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

The BA programme has a mix of theoretical and topical courses, with two 10-credit methods courses in the 2nd and the 3rd semester respectively. The first one, on research and method (BSS120_1) aims at developing an intuitive understanding of the research ethos, while the course on quantitative methods (BSS120) is a more hands-on introduction to analysis with SPSS. Both these courses are generic to programmes in sociology, political science and journalism. The programme seems unique in not offering an introduction to qualitative methods. Among other things, the 20-credit BA thesis aims to demonstrate that the students’ research abilities and the whole thesis-project is formulated in terms of an independent research task.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The KOMBEVAL panel suggested that UiS develop more innovative teaching and assessment methods to overcome some of the institutional limitations that restrict the frequency of seminars and limit the resources for feedback. In general, students are assessed on the basis of academic skills and reflective capacity. Assessment of research abilities is primarily done within the frame of the BA thesis, which is assessed based on scientific quality, among other things. Studiebarometeret indicates a much lower than average reliance on seminars, a somewhat lower frequency of written work, more group work without teacher, and more project work.

### Involvement in staff research

PhD students financed by the faculty develop their own project under the guidance of the supervisors, whereas PhD students who are funded by external research projects are obviously more involved with research undertaken by academic staff at the institution.

Apart from the thesis supervision process, there is no mention of other activities that involve students in staff research. MA students are often introduced to the research groups at the institution, and are offered to be involved with the on-going projects. However, the institution points to the difficulties in engaging students to write their theses on topics related to research projects. Students would often rather pursue their own ideas. The self-assessment states that this challenge is approached from two directions: firstly, efforts to motivate students to realize the benefits of linking their theses to a research project, and secondly, efforts to encourage academic staff to acknowledge students as a resource for their research projects. Plans for establishing a forum for presentations of students' contributions to research seem to be a step in the right direction.

## 4.7.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

The multidisciplinary organization of the faculty and the establishment of 'Research Area Programmes' (RAPs) is praiseworthy and highlighted in previous evaluations, as this arrangement promotes cross-disciplinary research. At the same time, it seems as if the main challenge to sociology at the University of Stavanger is the very same multidisciplinary environment, with regard to both teaching and research.

The broad statement that all research areas are integrated in all study programmes imply that everything – and nothing – is research-based education. A more thoughtful way of making this interplay explicit and precise would probably be beneficial and most likely reveal weaknesses and identify areas for improvement.

According to Studiebarometeret, there seems to be less seminars and less tasks of written work at the University of Stavanger compared to other universities, which indicates missed opportunities to involve students in research-oriented discussions and writings.

The institution offers good organizational incentives for promoting teachers to develop and improve their educational skills. A corresponding rise in research quality would be beneficial for developing sociology in general, and a stronger relationship between research and education in particular.

## 4.8 *University of Tromsø – The Artic University of Norway*

### 4.8.1 Comparison: research and education reports

SAMEVAL evaluated sociological research at the University of Tromsø – The Artic University of Norway (UiT) in two different units, the Faculty of Biosciences, Fisheries and Economics and the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education. We only consider the latter, which matches the unit evaluated in KOMBEVAL. The university offers BA and MA programmes in sociology. BA enrolment is below average, and the GPA of incoming students is low.

The SAMEVAL panel is critical of the research quality, pointing to few international publications, and rather low productivity as problematic areas, which the institution is also well aware of. SAMEVAL also notes that the research topics vary extremely, causing a fragmented disciplinary approach rather than developing depth. The very same weaknesses (low quality and quantity, fragmented, lacking international profile) was found in the 2010 evaluation of sociological research at UiT. The institution has formulated a plan for addressing this critique but, according to SAMEVAL, its effects are yet to be seen. Even if it is unrealistic to expect drastic changes in this relatively short time, it is disappointing that the plan of action has not led to an increase in scientific quality. The SAMEVAL panel concludes that there is a lack of integration of teaching and research, with few lecturers who are actively involved in research. SAMEVAL recommends that the institution make a long-term plan for recruitment and strategic research areas.

The KOMBEVAL panel thinks the BA programme lacks a coherent, cumulative structure, and that it offers too little methods training. In contrast, the MA programme appears to be more integrated, and to offer methods courses that advance knowledge skills obtained at the BA level. Overall, the panel is critical of the tendency at UiT to underplay research skills in both the BA and MA programme. KOMBEVAL notes that students report dissatisfaction with their experience with 'research and development work' and suggests that this reflects the insufficient attention to research methods throughout the programme. KOMBEVAL recommends updating the BA programme with more current research and approaches, to include more international literature, topics and authors in the curriculum, and to introduce a research-based BA thesis. KOMBEVAL sees potential for UiT to develop an international sociology programme around climate and the arctic.

An overall comparison between sociological research and education at UiT - The Arctic University of Norway is that both are fair and that education holds a slightly higher standard than research.

### 4.8.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

Apart from 5% assigned to administrative duties, a general rule is for staff to spend half of their time on research, and the other half on teaching. In hiring procedures, applicants to research positions are required to submit a pedagogical portfolio. Teaching and education are obligatory topics during every hiring interview, and often a trial lecture is included.

In collaboration with NTNU, the UiT has launched a project to improve teaching and acknowledge teaching qualifications. It is hard to say whether something has come out of this project just yet (apart

from a report). The organization also plans to introduce a qualification system with regard to teaching. In addition to these future prospects, the faculty informs about and encourages staff members to go to courses, seminars and workshops dealing with educational competence. Such events are often funded by the faculty.

### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Teaching staff with PhDs or equivalent research qualifications are estimated to make up around 80% of the teaching staff. Five of the twelve listed researchers for SAMEVAL are engaged in teaching. There is one research group submitted to SAMEVAL, Constructive sociology, which is set to analyse why Norwegian society works so well, that is claimed to be directly involved in teaching at all levels, from BA to PhD.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

Out of 90 sociology credit points in the BA programme, 10 credits are methods. The BA programme offers a mix of theory and topical sociology courses with an opportunity to specialize. The KOMBEVAL panel thought that the BA programme needed to be updated with more current sociological research and approaches. The third semester has a mandatory 10-credit methods course (SVF-1050) that offers a broad introduction to qualitative and quantitative methods. The course is generic for a number of social science BA programmes. In the final semester, students are required to take a course in sociological analysis (SOS-2001). However, this course is in fact a course in theorising, leaving the total research methods component of the sociology BA programme at only 10 credits. The BA thesis is an independent analysis of a sociological problem defined by the student. The thesis work draws upon an extensive reading list tailored to the topic of the thesis and is organized around a series of seminars. The focus is on reflective sociological skills, rather than research abilities. The BA thesis can be written by up to 3 students and it can draw upon an empirical analysis of primary or secondary data.

The MA programme has 60 credits of course work, of which 10+10 credits are quantitative (SVF-3004) and qualitative (SFV-3003) research methods. These offer considerable depth compared to the BA level methods course, and both offer hands-on training in empirical analysis. Both methods courses are generic to several social science programmes. The 60-credit MA thesis is introduced already in the 2nd semester, and it is expected to follow scientific research standards. The MA thesis can be either theoretical/conceptual or based upon empirical analysis of primary or secondary data.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

In their self-assessment for KOMBEVAL, UiT point out that their aim at the BA and MA level is not to develop researchers, while at the same time they insist that it is important that students demonstrate the ability to work scientifically. The fact that some MA students are offered a research grant for participating in specific research projects at the institution in order to write their theses on a closely related topic is a sign that the institution also takes a more active approach to students' research orientation.

Studiebarometeret indicates that BA students have much more teaching in seminar form than the national average, while MA students have more lectures, more group work without teacher, and more project work. BA and MA students are somewhat less satisfied with achieved learning in terms of 'knowledge of scientific work methods and research', while MA students report higher satisfaction

with ‘experience with research and development work’ than the national average. Note though, that the response rate for BA students is only 20 percent.

#### Involvement in staff research

It is stated in the self-assessment that all PhD students at the department are assigned to a disciplinary or interdisciplinary research group. Apart from being encouraged to take part in daily academic activities, PhD students are assigned specific research tasks for the research groups. Whereas BA students as a general rule are not involved in staff research, MA students might very well be. The offering of MA research grants to students facilitates this practice, where the student participates directly in a project run by the research group. Other ways of including MA students is to hire them as research assistants.

### 4.8.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

UiT struggles with a fragmented research environment and a somewhat incoherent BA programme. Both SAMEVAL and KOMBEVAL are fairly critical in their evaluations. There is no doubt that the university needs to consider how it can create the focus and depth that will increase the quality of sociological research and education at UiT in the long run. In other words, the preconditions for successful interplay between research and education are not the most favourable. The department is fairly passive in its view of research-based education and there are few signs of a consistent strategy for interaction between research and education.

The self-assessment for KOMBEVAL insists that the role of the MA is not to produce researchers and the MA students themselves are not so happy with the learning environment. Still, generally speaking the MA programme appears to be research-oriented in its design, and UiT offers MA students good opportunities for research-based learning by inviting them to write their thesis as part of a larger research project. Thus there appears to be a basis for positive change. Other activities that are already in place, such as student conferences and invited guest lecturers, could also be used more strategically towards the interplay between research and education.

## 4.9 *Patterns across institutions*

The task of evaluating the interplay between research and education in Norwegian sociology has not been an easy one. At least in part, we think this is because SAMEVAL and KOMBEVAL were not, as far as we can see, originally designed for that purpose. The evaluations work for assessing research and education at the national level, but we find that there is not enough detail at the institutional level to assess something as multifaceted as interplay. Nevertheless, we took on this pilot of evaluating interplay, and, to the best of our ability we have tried to draw conclusions on the basis of the materials that have been made available to us.

**What is 'research-based education'?**

It has been suggested that the link between research and education in teaching can be conceptualized in a typology that distinguish research-tutored, research-based, research-led, and research-oriented teaching. Moreover, the whole teaching and learning process can be research-informed. (See NIFU 2016:8, p. 17).

Based on the KOMBEVAL report, we would argue that all sociology programmes in Norway are *research-tutored* (i.e. learning focused on students writing papers and essays), leading up to the BA or MA thesis. There is also a strong presence of *research-led* learning in the sense that most programmes build upon sociological research content. We also find that by taking seriously philosophy of social sciences and the sociology of knowledge, all sociology programmes have a *research-orientation*. Many programmes also have aspects of *research-based* learning in that they provide students hands-on research experience, oftentimes through the thesis work. Based on the self-reports, our impression is that sociology training in Norway is not particularly *research-informed*, i.e. institutions invest little time in efforts to understand and develop the teaching and learning process. If by interplay we mean that there should be an ongoing interaction between research and education and that the career development of teachers is a co-evolution of research and teachings skills, then Norwegian sociology is not yet there. Even though there seem to be a consistent 50/50 balance between teaching and research obligations for university teachers, the incentive structure uniformly rewards research, not teaching, and definitely not the interplay between research and teaching. However, it is a positive sign that most, if not all, universities appear to be aware of this 'deficit' and that they have or are introducing various measures to tackle this, including the setup of university learning centres. Here we would like to point out the obvious, that the duality of university careers and the limited attention to research-informed learning is not in any way unique to higher education in Norway or to Norwegian sociology.

In the typology, research-based learning is defined as being focused on students as active participants in the knowledge construction process, with the aim of advancing knowledge about research processes and problems. Thus, in the typology, for instance research-based learning is the opposite of research-led, in which research content is taught to 'passive' students. But when institutions refer to research-based learning, neither that, nor any other of the distinctions above is visible. In practice, when institutions talk about research-based education it appears to cover the whole spectrum of the typology, ranging from teaching students about research results, through showing students what it means to be a researcher, to actually providing students with research experience. It is however always taken for granted that research-based education is a good thing and that it is something to strive for. Throughout the self-evaluations, research-based education is mentioned only in positive terms, and, at the same time, without reflecting over what it actually means.

While the literature on research-based education departs from the curriculum and the students' learning, the everyday discussion oftentimes starts with the teachers. Perhaps the most common notion of research-based education at universities, particularly among teachers who are also strongly committed to research, is that the content and learning materials are based upon the teacher's own research. The collective version of the same line of reasoning is that the content and learning materials are based upon the research that takes place in the research environment/department/institution. This understanding of research-based education is also widespread in Norwegian sociology.

What we observe in Norwegian sociology is a clear link between high quality research and high quality education. This does not necessarily mean that there is also interplay. The KOMBEVAL panel evaluated education along several dimensions, and even though the instrument put heavy weight on research-based curricula; in terms of research content, outlook, and methods, other aspects of the learning environment and materials were also used to assess the quality of education. We also observe that some of the universities that SAMEVAL put in the mid-range of research quality display the most creative approaches to interplay between research and education in Norwegian sociology.

Based on the evaluations, we believe that university teachers' research experience is a minimum requirement for providing research-based education in a competent and trustworthy way. Preferably, the teacher should also be an active researcher. Still, much more can be done to strengthen the relationship between research and education than just ensuring that teachers are research qualified. This includes a continuous review of teaching materials so that they reflect international and state-of-the-art research literatures, to have methods training play a prominent role in programmes, and to use research-based BA and MA theses. It is also important to have a career system with incentives that encourage and reward investment not only in research output, but also in developing the link between research and teaching.

Realistically speaking, small countries like Norway can never afford more than at most a handful of strong research environments in sociology, probably fewer. It is possible to consider an educational programme that delivers high quality education imprinted by state-of-the-art research, i.e. which is research-led, without access to a local research environment. But could such an institution also deliver true research-based learning, i.e. where students get research experience? In the present system the answer is no, and we believe that some current institutions simply do not exist under conditions that are necessarily required to deliver high quality research-based education.

Below, we will comment on some crucial areas for interplay, with the purpose of sharing some of our reflections from reading the material for this evaluation. We will also list some examples that stood out as particularly fruitful or innovative for enhancing interplay between research and education.

## Opportunities and occasions for enhancing interplay

*Teaching material*

The list of required literature on a course is an opportunity to introduce research conducted by other international researchers than (only) academic staff at the institution. In order to provide an updated reading list, with relevant state-of-the-art research, an 'expert panel' could be tied to each course. Such a panel of research colleagues would assist the course leader with suggestions of new and varied

research that could be introduced in the teaching materials. At a university, it goes without saying that researchers should be involved in developing the course content. At the same time, it is not uncommon for academic staff to develop in two different directions, leading to one more teaching-oriented group and one group that is more research-oriented. An expert panel for the continuous work of selecting literature could mitigate consequences of this divide.

*Methods and methodology*

Learning how to do (and review) research – the topics for methods and thesis courses – are activities where the opportunity for interplay between research and education is most evident. Most universities participating in the evaluation emphasize their efforts to enhance interplay in relation to the MA thesis. For example, some institutions organize a 'research day' in order to present ongoing research at the department to MA students, inviting them to choose a closely related topic. We have the impression, however, that courses in methods and methodology could be planned in more thoughtful ways: not only with regard to content, but also in terms of where they take place in the educational programmes. At some universities we have also noticed that methodology courses are taught by teachers who are the least experienced researchers in the department. This is a highly unfortunate solution since teaching methods requires extensive research experience for the teacher to be able to complement the methods literature by illustrating, exemplifying, and conveying nuances. Furthermore, the 'tradition' in Norway and elsewhere to separate methodology and methods from substantial and thematic courses is counterproductive from an interplay perspective. We argue that a stronger within-course integration of methods training and substantive sociology would be a productive way to increase the interplay between research and education in sociology programmes.

*Thesis work*

While the MA thesis work in Norway is extensive and demanding, taking up two full semesters, the BA thesis seems to be a much smaller task with comparatively low requirements in terms of research capacity (at times no more than a review of literature with no data to work on, as far as we can tell). Since the thesis work offers an excellent opportunity to learn and develop research skills, we believe some institutions should significantly raise their ambitions and expectations for the BA thesis. If students decide to continue their studies, this will make them better prepared for the MA thesis. For students who decide to go somewhere else, it might be even more important, since the BA thesis will form their understanding of sociological research as a craft.

Several institutions have reported on their efforts to tie the MA theses to research groups at the department. They have also noted that sometimes there are difficulties in getting students to join research projects because they value writing about a topic that they chose themselves (often against teachers' better judgement, we would like to add). Nevertheless, some institutions put a little extra effort into engaging students with research conducted by their research groups, for instance by having a 'research day' (see below). A 'bank' of thesis-ideas built up by researchers at the department could be another way of making students interested.

*Incentives*

As a way of balancing a strong research focus, several institutions have implemented pedagogical awards, etc. It is worth considering the purpose and consequences of such awards. Without knowing the criteria for granting teaching and pedagogical awards it is an open question whether or not they work to the advantage of interplay between research and teaching. To what extent, for instance, does student nominated awards take into consideration aspects of research-based teaching? A worst-case scenario is that teaching awards become yet another factor in the separation of research and teaching, especially if they are seen as merits that compensate for weak research achievement. In general, incentives that rewards research-in-teaching or teaching-in-research achievements could be used to underscore contributions to the interplay between research and teaching. Aspects to consider for reward would be, for instance, the involvement of students in the research process and the development of teaching methods and assessment criteria that emphasize students' research capacity.

**Inspiring examples**

We have seen some inspiring examples of extracurricular activities that target the interplay between research and education. Professor Tjora's Sociological policlinic at NTNU is worth mentioning here, its members representing BA, MA and PhD students, as well as academic staff. The common goal of the clinic is to 'develop, uphold and supply meaningful sociology'. Another noteworthy activity, also at NTNU, is the Sociology Festival. Once a year, a day is devoted to sociological debate and research, with both staff and students among the participants. Some master students are given the opportunity to present their master theses here.

At a few institutions, staff are able to apply for funding for a master thesis study that is linked to research projects at the department (e.g. University in Agder and Nord University). Apparently, this grant scheme is placed at university level, and it was unclear to us whether these opportunities are frequently used. It is a particularly promising idea since it holds incentives for both students and researchers, and it might be worth considering implementing it at the institutional (or faculty) level. Several institutions strive to encourage MA students to write their theses within a given research project, and some describe students' reluctance to do so. At Nord University, for instance, they have a Research Day before master students choose a topic, to offer them opportunities to write their theses within a project.

**Conclusion**

A general trend, as far as we can see, is that quality in research and quality in education go hand in hand. In other words, where there is high quality research there is also high quality education. Low quality research environments may still provide high quality education, but in Norwegian sociology programmes there is no indication that strong research environments provide weak education. Even without systematic evidence, we would still speculate that there is indeed a causal direction in which quality in research spills over into quality in teaching.

Whereas institutions' educational programmes may have stronger quality than the research carried out at the institution, the other way around seem to be unlikely. The institutions included in this evaluation

provide no example where research quality is assessed higher than the quality of its educational programmes.

Interplay between research and teaching seems to be more established and developed at institutions where research quality is assessed as high. Still, some of the more innovative examples of interplay opportunities are found at universities with mid-range research quality.

# 5 Economics

## 5.1 *Norwegian University of Life Sciences*

### 5.1.1 Comparison: research and education reports

The NMBU School of Economics and Business is one of the seven faculties at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU). As the data and information provided on NMBU was relatively scarce, our evaluation is unavoidably somewhat limited.

The NMBU School of Economics and Business offers study programmes at bachelor, master and PhD level. There is one programme in each of the three levels. With a total of 680 registered students, the school is small; and so are the programmes at all levels. Also the size of the faculty is small, with 28 people. They cover the fields of economics, entrepreneurship and innovation. The university acknowledges that the number of students is on the low side and that it had to reduce the number of elective courses in response to the low student numbers. Still, the university feels that resources are sufficient to offer well-rounded programmes covering microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics and some specialisations. It furthermore indicates that there are plans to develop new courses that are of interest to students in both business and economics, especially in skills.

The KOMBEVAL panel concluded that the programmes are indeed small, rather traditional, and solid. The specializations offered are (unavoidably, given the scale) limited. The panel therefore appreciates and supports the attempts to consider the potential for somewhat broader programmes linking economics and business more strongly, but at the same time also concludes that the development of plans is still in a very early phase. It appreciates the strong position that the university has in PhD education, partly stemming from the history of the institute and the clear identity with a focus on agriculture. Regarding the pedagogical quality, the panel concludes that much depends on the quality of individual lecturers. The KOMBEVAL panel finds it surprising that there is little evidence of cooperation with the nearby University of Oslo.

Regarding research, the SAMEVAL report concludes that the institution is, on average, able to produce research of a good quality, published typically in field journals. The research productivity is highly skewed and relies on a few very productive researchers. It encourages the institute to work on its recruitment policy (towards a more international one for the permanent positions as well), and on incentives for a more even research productivity. A strategy for societal impact might be helpful too, given the potential that lies in the very topical areas of research at the institution.

All in all, both education and research are deemed to be good by both panels, but the assessments also emphasize the small scale.

### 5.1.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

The NMBU School of Economics and Business is a separate faculty within NMBU and houses 31 faculty members. The faculty is governed by a board consisting of the dean and several faculty members and students. Day-to-day decisions are made by an executive committee consisting of the dean and the heads of administration, research and education. The latter two are also chairs of the research committee and the education committee. The tasks of the different governing bodies in the faculty are clearly defined and appropriate, given the size of the faculty. In addition to the formal organisation of the faculty as a whole, there is an informal organisation of the research and education. In the case of the research, the faculty members are divided among eight research groups (according to research domain), which differ in terms of their activity levels and collaboration.

NMBU School of Economics and Business aims to be a leading institution in research and education in Norway within its profile, which builds on its earlier emphasis on environment, natural sciences, social responsibility and ethics. The size of the faculty might necessitate some modesty in defining ambitions; nevertheless, within a fairly narrowly defined niche, the university might express more ambition, such as an ambition to be internationally at the forefront of defined domains. The faculty collaborates with a large range of universities from different continents; hence, a more ambitious aim does not seem far stretched.

The KOMBEVAL panel was informed that, at the PhD level there is a rather big group of international students, mainly from developing countries. The panel appreciates this and sees clear potential to build on this, but at the same time it feels that an effort is needed to reach quality targets. Strategic cooperation with, for example, UiO might help generate the resources that are needed.

There is very little information about seminar activities and international visitors in economics to the NMBU School of Economics and Business. The school itself seems to have decent international contacts. The panel encourages the institution to actively build stronger international networks and seminar activity.

#### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Apart from the small scale, it strikes us that there is somewhat inconsistent information regarding the balance between research and education in the staff. The claim in the educational self-assessment report that there is no trade-off felt between research and education is not convincing to us and information in the various reports is also not consistent on this matter. The self-assessment report states that the staff puts lots of effort into teaching and loves to teach. The education panel finds that the department could build on this enthusiasm in teaching also by further developing teaching methods that favour a more varied approach. Regarding research it is striking that the publications are unevenly divided among staff members. This seems to point to an imbalance, with, in practice, part of the staff being primarily responsible for education and another part of the staff excelling in research.

#### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

The grade point requirement for entry to the bachelor program is relatively low. Otherwise, the panel considers the entry requirements to be standard. Still, it wonders why there is no requirement for specialisation in mathematics in high school. Given the importance of mathematics in the discipline,

clearly flagging its importance is deemed relevant by the panel, especially in order to minimize the chance of early drop outs. Despite the small scale, there is larger demand than supply of positions, so selection is possible (although the admission criteria are relatively soft at both the bachelor as well as the master level). Regarding the research orientation, the panel has the impression that this is mainly developed in the context of writing the thesis, although there is limited evidence on this in the self-assessment report.

#### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The teaching and assessment methods look standard and traditional. The panel gets the impression that they are largely supply driven. There is no written evidence on how the faculty tries to develop a curriculum with appropriate methods to ensure student participation. Final assessment is still largely based on written exams. Learning outcomes are defined, but the panel feels that a systematic revision of intended learning outcomes and the coherence between the learning outcomes of different courses is a desirable next step.

#### Involvement in staff research

The faculty is responsible for five BSc-MSc programmes and one PhD programme. Apart from student involvement in the research, it is unclear whether the research feeds into the course programmes.

### 5.1.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

Based on the limited information available, it is our impression that the university offers a very standard curriculum with a very small staff. This limits scope for specialization. Also the staff itself seems to be divided into staff that focuses relatively strongly on research and staff that is more responsible for education. A strength of the university is the huge group of international PhD students that in terms of research interest is nicely linked to the core competencies of the university.

Overall, it is our impression – based on the limited information available – that the degree of interplay between research and teaching is low to medium, uneven across fields, and particularly hampered by the small scale of the institute, which is partly compensated by a relatively focused research orientation.

## 5.2 *Norwegian University of Science and Technology*

### 5.2.1 Comparison: research and education reports

The Department of Economics at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) has an academic staff of around 15 persons. Today the department offers bachelor's and master's programmes, and also a PhD programme with 12 students. The research is concentrated in three areas: public economics, natural resources, environmental and development economics, and macro and financial economics. The SAMEVAL report concludes that the NTNU Department of Economics' research is very good and the KOMBEVAL report concludes that the department is a well-established international department with a sound offering of economics training.

The department offers a two-year master programme in economics (120 ECTS) as well as a five-year integrated master programme in economics, both taught in Norwegian. Students in the two-year programme and in the five-year programme take the same courses, though the students in the integrated five-year programme take them during the first three years of the programme. This leaves the students with more opportunities to take elective courses during the last two years.

The motive for the five-year master is to have a master with stronger focus on economics with more specialization. Moreover, there is one more mandatory course in Econometrics in the five-year master programmes, implying a stronger focus on methodology. There is also a stricter requirement with respect to the prerequisites in mathematics for enrollment onto the programme. To us it thus appears that the students on the five-year programme in reality are brought further towards research and an understanding of research in economics than students in the two-year programme.

The programme has a strong emphasis on applied econometrics and application of software for quantitative analysis. There is also a strong offering in public economics in the elective parts of the programmes.

The programme provides a list of options for thesis projects to help the students develop project proposals that may realistically be carried out within the set time-frame.

It does not appear that any of the programs have a research specialization that specifically prepares the students for PhD studies. In view of the limited number of PhD students at NTNU this may be a wise choice.

The department is involved in several bachelor programmes. There is a straight economics bachelor, but also a bachelor in Political Economy in collaboration with the Department of Sociology and Political Science. However, this will be closed down due to low completion rates. The self-evaluation describes comprehensive and well-structured programmes. The overall impression of the KOMBEVAL panel, which we share, is that NTNU has a sound offering of economics training. The KOMBEVAL panel found that the programmes offered are rather standard.

In short, both evaluations conclude that research and education at the department are of very good standards.

### 5.2.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

With only 17 researchers, the department is relatively small. The fact that two are in Ålesund probably does not add to creating critical mass in research (and teaching). The department emphasizes in its self-evaluation that '*Research-active lecturers are important to introduce students to research done at the department and research in general. All courses offered by the department of economics are taught by lecturers with a PhD in economics, with mandatory research time, and who publish regularly in well-recognized international journals. The elective courses at the master level are closely related to the department's research fields, which gives students insight to research conducted at the department. The master students are encouraged to discuss existing research during these courses. Further, students develop their research abilities through active use of relevant software in econometric courses at the bachelor and master level. When doing their master thesis, most students are involved in staff research in the sense that their theses cover topics within the research interests of the supervisors'.*

The department also writes that 'in some cases, we hire master students as research assistants, typically to collect and process data'. It is a bit unclear how many cases, 'in some cases' cover.

The self-evaluation report does not point to specific areas where the department strategically has chosen to support research-based teaching.

#### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

The SAMEVAL panel concluded that the level of research was very good. Hence, there is a good basis for offering research-based teaching.

The time allocated for academic staff is 45 percent for research and teaching, respectively, and 25% for teaching for PhD students. These allocations ensure that researchers are active in teaching and thus form a fundamental basis for research-based teaching. From 'the overview of course and affiliated lectures by study programme' offered to us, it is clear that the research faculty is indeed involved in teaching and in taking responsibility for the courses.

When comparing the overview of courses and the research orientations of staff it is our assessment that the faculty as such has the competences for providing a research-based program in economics. However, the rather small size of the faculty and the fact that research is concentrated in three areas: public economics, natural resources, environmental and development economics, and macro and financial economics, means that a strong research base for offering teaching outside these specializations is not present.

We note in passing that, in this perspective, it is a positive feature that so many students go abroad and get exposed to other environments, where they can find research-based teaching in more fields.

At the BA level this should be less of a problem, but at higher levels, MA and PhD, it means that the department can only offer real research-based teaching in a selected set of areas. Obviously, there is a strategic choice to be made, and we are sympathetic to the choice made by the department. The rather small group at NTNU enables itself to be on the international research frontier exactly by concentrating on specific areas. This has the unavoidable cost that it is difficult to perform research-based teaching in

other areas. Still, the department may consider collaborating with other departments and perhaps offering shorter courses on specific topics by using faculty from other Norwegian (or international) departments.

The department itself notes that a challenge for optimizing the interplay of education and research is that some students have interests that are not linked to ongoing research at the department. On the other hand, the department emphasizes that most students choose from topics suggested by the department. Again, the department may consider allowing students to have (co-)supervisors from other departments.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

The programmes offer a solid basis at the BA level in micro- and macroeconomics, statistics, mathematics and econometrics. With the limited information available to us, it is a bit hard to assess what exactly the course content is. The course descriptions are standard descriptions, but to which extent the courses bring the students close to the research frontier is a bit unclear.

Still, the curricula that we have seen describe solid economics courses, as they are being taught across the world. The students appear to get a solid introduction to economics and the methodology of economics, theoretical as well as empirical. As such they provide students with a toolkit to become good researchers.

There is not information provided to us that indicates that there are courses where the students are expected to independently analyse economic problems using the toolkit they have learned in the basic courses. This may be because our information is incomplete. Otherwise, we would encourage the department to consider such (a) course(s). It appears that it is only in the BA and MA theses that students get experience of working independently on a problem.

The self-assessment points out that lecturers are active researchers, but there is no further description of what has been done in order to ensure that teaching is research-based.

The duration of the PhD programme is three years and it includes a course component of 45 credits. The department acknowledges that, due to its relatively small size, it is hard to offer a comprehensive PhD programme. Instead, one relies on visiting professors and on sending the students abroad. We find that this is an entirely sensible strategy. Some PhD students have four-year contracts with a one-year teaching load, while others have three-year contracts with no teaching load. The panel considers this to be an appropriate way to increase the amount of teaching offered by researchers.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The material provided to us does not offer much information about teaching methods. We get the impression that NTNU offers rather standard programmes in economics. The self-evaluation emphasizes that courses are taught by research-active lectures and that the electives at the master's level are closely related to the research frontier. Furthermore, the independent work done by students in BA and MA theses is highlighted. A more detailed discussion of teaching methods and assessment has not been provided.

#### Involvement in staff research

The self-assessment report clearly demonstrates that all teaching staff are researchers. The involvement of students in research takes place in thesis work and as research assistants. As we understand it, the number of research assistants is limited (cf. the phrase 'in some cases'). We would encourage the department to consider hiring more research assistants, i.e. include the positive spill-over into research-based teaching by employing more students, who get actively involved in the departments research.

### 5.2.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

When we combine the insights of the research and teaching evaluations it is clear that the NTNU has a solid set of bachelor and master programmes that are offered in a research environment of very good quality.

It is our assessment that the department offers a research-based programme in economics which, given the limited resources, is of a good standard. The curricula that we have seen describe traditional courses, which introduce the students to the research tools of economics. We would encourage the department to develop courses where the students actively apply the tools of economics to important economic problems and work independently. We acknowledge that this happens in the thesis work, but we also believe that preparing the students for thesis work during such courses would strengthen the research – based teaching. We applaud the use of research assistants and would encourage the department to increase the number of such assistants.

In our view, the department does have a challenge from a teaching perspective, since its research is rather concentrated in only three specific areas. We understand the prioritization and do not encourage the department to spread itself thinly across many areas. But we do encourage the department to think carefully about which solutions can be found to this problem, which does make the research foundation of some teaching a bit weak.

Overall, we find that the degree of interplay between research and teaching is uneven across the various fields. In areas where the department has strong research the interplay is high, in others the degree appears to be medium.

## 5.3 *University of Bergen*

### 5.3.1 Comparison: research and education reports

The Department of Economics at the University of Bergen (UiB) offers four programmes in economics, comprising two bachelor programmes in economics, viz. a BSc in economics and a BSc in political economy, a two-year master programme (120 ECTS) and a five-year integrated master degree in economics (300 ECTS). The department consists of a relatively small staff with 18 tenured professors and associate professors. Additionally, there is a number of assistant professors and postdocs in the department. The research groups in economics cover competition and finance; labour, social insurance and family; health; and behavioural environmental and development economics.

The KOMBEVAL report concludes that the size of the educational programmes at the Department of Economics is highly viable. Its proximity to NHH is attractive and adds to the vibrant academic atmosphere in the city and the university. Also the links with research institutes seem to be well developed. The department is strong with internationally recognized scholars, a good reputation and a vibrant research environment. International mobility of students is relatively high. The panel sees clear potential to further strengthen the links between the university and the industries in the region. Also a further strengthening of cooperation with NHH seems possible and mutually beneficial.

The SAMEVAL report concludes that research quality at the Department of Economics is very good. Given the relatively modest size of the department and the research groups therein, the quantity and quality of the publications – also in terms of citations – is impressive. Almost half of the publications are internationally co-authored and published in the very top outlets, but also in the next and highly competitive layer that includes top field journals and so on. They cover topics of great social relevance. In light of the fact that some of the most successfully published work has been carried out by relatively young faculty researchers, the future development and quality of the department's research look very promising.

In short, both evaluations conclude that research and education at the department are of high standards

### 5.3.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

Research production possibilities are good and being active in both research and education is the norm. There are a number of internationally leading scholars in Professor II positions (10-20% positions). Support mechanisms enable PhDs and postdocs to spend time abroad. There is a seminar series, monthly PhD-seminars and joint workshops with NHH. The research environment appears to be good, also for young PhD scholars.

Roughly half of the permanent position holders are between 60 and 70 years of age and will consequently be replaced in the coming years. In a medium size department, which teaches full programmes in economics, recruitment of faculty implies that one has to strike a balance between teaching needs and specialization in research. Another balance is between hiring local and international

faculty, as a considerable part of teaching requires Norwegian language skills. The department is clearly well aware of these important balancing decisions.

We find it somewhat surprising that at UiB, most courses are still taught in Norwegian. This allows for relatively few possibilities to accommodate international students in the programme. The department reports that all programmes emphasize the benefits of studying abroad, and the department has 29 agreements with Erasmus universities. UiB also receives many students from abroad through Erasmus. In terms of internationalisation, the department benefits from its strong network of international adjunct researchers who contribute to teaching.

### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Both the KOMBEVAL panel and the SAMEVAL panel found that the quality of the staff is good. The SAMEVAL panel concluded that the level of research was very good. Hence, there is a strong basis for offering research-based teaching, but also some concerns about the relatively small scale of the department.

Teaching and administrative tasks are expected to account for a little over half of the working time, and the rest is available for research work. External funding can also to some extent be used to buy staff out of teaching.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

The department's self-assessment report states that the department finds that several students at the bachelor level lack the sufficient background in mathematics. This has led the department to strengthen its teaching in mathematics in the first semester of the BSc programme, following a perceived need for a stronger focus on basic maths skills as a prerequisite for studying Economics. The department is considering stricter formal requirements in maths, which we strongly support, in order to create a solid foundation for a research-based curriculum.

The core elements of the bachelor programme are, to a large extent, similar to most well-structured BA programmes at good European research universities. The bachelor study concludes with a project amounting to 10 ECTS credits. Apart from a Statistics/Econometrics course, there is no more mandatory Econometrics in the bachelor programme. The KOMBEVAL panel finds that the mandatory coursework in Statistics and Econometrics is less demanding than what is common in other comparable Economics bachelor programmes in Europe.

The MSc programme consists in its first semester of three compulsory courses (each 10 ECTS): Microeconomic Analysis, Macroeconomic Analysis, and Econometrics. Furthermore, in the second and third semester, there are five elective courses in economics (each 10 ECTS). Students can choose among a variety of courses in economics offered at the department. In the third semester, the programme offers a mandatory, preparatory course for the master's thesis (10 ECTS). In their fourth semester, students write their master's thesis (30 ECTS).

The panel finds that the preparatory course for the thesis is a good way of preparing students for writing a thesis and may also be valuable experience for a later research career.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The pedagogical quality report further discusses the department's interpretation of 'research-based teaching', which seems to favour the (widespread) idea that this is teaching that is updated on the research frontier. However, alternative interpretations include the idea of developing teaching activities that teach students to think like a researcher. This idea is backed up by, for example, a number of articles in a recent special issue of *The Journal of Economic Education* and in *American Economic Review,* which evaluate the experiences in the top 30 liberal arts colleges and top 30 national universities in the US.[5] Teaching that teaches students to think in a researcher-like way is not central in UiB's economics programmes, which may also explain the students' somewhat low assessment of experience with research and development work in Studiebarometeret. Overall, the pedagogical report emphasizes that the pedagogical quality of the economics programmes at UiB is very good.

Nevertheless, there is an awareness about giving the students a research orientation. The self-evaluation report rather extensively explains how research is integrated in the curriculum: '*At all levels of teaching we use research articles as part of the curriculum, except for introductory courses at the BA level and methodological courses. For some courses at the master's level research articles constitute the main part of the reading list. Most applied and empirical cases used in teaching are from research articles. We use our own research in teaching, and explain in detail how research published in high quality journal are carried through, focusing on theory, research design, estimation and discussion of results. In all written assignments there is a strong focus on developing analytical thinking skills as they are vital in the process of gathering information, articulate, visualize and solve complex problems. ..... Research studies are sometimes replicated in PC-lab and discussed in class. We also provide information on research methods, ethics issues such as cheating and plagiarism, ..... PhD level students are encouraged to present their work at different staff and lunch seminars. ..... some courses have a stronger research focus. One example is the course in empirical research design (ECON343), where an important part of the learning outcome is to bring a research topic from theory to consistent empirical analysis and conduct advanced analysis on different data sets*'.

It is our assessment that the programme offers a genuine opportunity for students to learn research and its methods. We applaud the ECON 343 example.

### Involvement in staff research

Internships seem to be part of the integrated programme, but not the two-year MSc programme. One solution to increase internships is to make them ECTS-carrying. The panel speculates why internship is treated differently in the MSc and the integrated master programme.

Teaching at UiB is research-based, and, especially with respect to the elective courses at both the bachelor and the master level, the staff's research interests are heavily reflected in the menu of courses.

## 5.3.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

Combining the insights of the research and teaching evaluations it is clear that the University of Bergen has a solid set of bachelor and master programmes that are offered in a high-quality research

[5] See several articles in special issue in *The Journal of Economic Education*, 2017, 48(4); and Hoyt, G.M., & K.M. McGoldrick (2017): Promoting Undergraduate Research in Economics. *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings*, 107(5):655-659.

environment. The quality of the staff and the available resources is strong but relatively limited in quantitative terms.

It is our assessment that the department offers a research-based programme in economics and that the students at the master's level are exposed to the international research frontier. The curricula that we have seen describe traditional courses, which introduce the students to the research tools of economics. Especially at the bachelor level, but also at the MA level, there is scope for improvement and deepening, as acknowledged by the university itself.

Overall, it is our assessment that the interplay between research and teaching is high.

## 5.4 *University of Oslo*

### 5.4.1 Comparison: research and education reports

The Department of Economics at the University of Oslo (UiO) is the largest and oldest institute for economic research in Norway. Today the department offers bachelor's and master's programmes, and also a PhD programme with around 40 students. The department's research areas include empirical microeconomics, environmental economics, welfare economics, macroeconomics, and international trade. The economics department in Oslo is on top in terms of quality and quantity of research and teaching in Norway.

The SAMEVAL report concludes that research at the Department of Economics is of excellent quality. The productivity of individual researchers is mostly very good, and the outlets are either good field journals or top journals. The frequency of top publications is quite high and very nicely distributed across many researchers. The research also has clear societal impact. The department has a sufficient critical mass, as evidenced, amongst others, by a relatively large number of PhD candidates.

The department offers a two-year master programme in economics taught in English (120 ECTS) and a five-year integrated master programme in Economic Theory and Econometrics (300 ECTS). For the last two years of the five-year programme, the learning outcomes and structure are quite similar to the two-year programme. The department emphasises that the programmes have a strong grounding in mathematics and statistics, and a relatively theoretical orientation. The programme has a research specialization, which prepares students for a PhD trajectory. Our overall assessment is that the University of Oslo has a solid set of bachelor and master programmes that are offered in a high-quality research environment. The programmes appear to be solid, traditional economics programmes that seem to offer a good entry ticket to international programmes. The existing programmes are rather traditional, as are the teaching and assessment methods. The KOMBEVAL panel encouraged the management to develop a strong vision for education excellence, for example by applying for international accreditations and further strengthening the educational leadership that can act as a driver for change. Also, educational quality benefits from competition and, given the high-quality resources, the university can gain from organizing the competition and have the ambition to become top in Europe. A greater ambition in terms of internationalization can be instrumental for this.

In short, both evaluations conclude that research and education at the department are of high standards.

### 5.4.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

With more than 80 researchers, the department is relatively large. The Faculty's main research aims are to encourage basic research as well as applied research, both theoretical as well as empirical, of high quality and relevance. It aims to be at the forefront of international research in some areas and leading in Europe for many more. The research environment acknowledges the importance of bottom-up research. The goals are clear and ambitious.

The department emphasizes in its self-evaluation that it supports staff prioritizing and improving their teaching in various ways:

Firstly, participation in competence development courses is encouraged and there is a dedicated effort to train staff members in pedagogy. All new employees are required to complete 100 hours of training in university pedagogy within two years of employment. Pedagogical training and teaching experience is also a requirement for promotion from associate to full professor.

Secondly, the department regularly undertakes teaching and course evaluations to obtain feedback from students. The department has staff meetings where teaching experiences are discussed and exchanged to inspire the lecturers, and the Head of Department discusses teaching with the staff in appraisal meetings. Furthermore, the Faculty offers an optional course on educational leadership.

Thirdly, the Faculty also offers incentives (2017: 200 000 NOK) to staff who want to try out varied and appropriate teaching and assessment methods, and students award one of the lecturers with the prize 'lecturer of the year'.

These initiatives are sensible and comparable to initiatives we are aware of in many other departments in Europe.

### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

Both the KOMBEVAL panel and the SAMEVAL panel found that the quality of the staff is very strong. The SAMEVAL panel concluded that the level of research was excellent. Hence, there is a strong basis for offering research-based teaching.

The time allocated for academic staff is 47 percent for research and teaching, respectively (with more research and less teaching for tenure-track assistant professors, postdocs and senior researchers over 60). These allocations ensure that researchers are active in teaching and thus form a fundamental basis for research-based teaching.

From 'the overview of course and affiliated lectures by study programme' offered to us, it is clear that the research faculty is strongly involved in teaching and in taking responsibility for the courses.

PhD students can receive financing for a fourth year, provided they teach. This gives them opportunities to develop themselves as lecturers. From a research-based teaching point of view, it expands the base from which to offer research-based teaching. Furthermore, good Master's students are selected to teach at the bachelor level. This is a nice way of integrating the good students into academia and give them valuable experience.

We have not seen statistics on the fraction of teaching conducted by faculty, compared to external teachers.

When comparing the overview of courses and the research orientations of staff it is our assessment that the faculty as such has the competences for providing a comprehensive research-based programme in economics.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

The programmes offer a solid foundation in micro- and macroeconomics, statistics, mathematics and econometrics and, as such, provide students with a toolkit to become good researchers.

The curricula that we have seen describe solid economics courses, as they are being taught across the world. The students appear to get a solid introduction to economics and the methodology of economics, both theoretical and empirical. Furthermore, there are mandatory courses, such as Econ 3010, Anvendt Økonomisk Analyse (Applied economic analysis), where the students are required to conduct an independent analysis of real world economic and political problems, utilizing the tools of economics.

The self-assessment mentions that lecturers use insights and examples from research in BA courses, and that topics courses (such as development economics, welfare, economic policy and international economics) are, in general, taught by faculty who do research in the area. At the Master level, research orientation is secured in core courses through the review of key papers that provide the basis of theories and methods of the textbooks, or by including examples of empirical work on current data. In specialized topics courses students are brought closer to the research frontier. This is partly because the course portfolio also represents the research interests of the faculty.

The PhD programme is a three-year course and includes a course component of 45 credits. Courses on advanced methods are offered. To ensure high standards, the department makes use of top researchers from abroad to cover some elective PhD courses.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The KOMBEVAL panel found that the teaching and assessment methods are rather traditional, as is probably true for most advanced economics programmes in Europe. More advanced courses have a clear research orientation. Despite available incentives for innovation, the panel has seen little evidence of real progress in the further development of teaching and assessment methods, and in attempts to improve the student's activities during the semester. The panel sees clear potential for further developments in this direction that can – with relatively small investments – substantially improve the quality of education and the attractiveness of the programmes. These conclusions are supported by Studiebarometeret.

The material provided to us does not offer much information about teaching methods. From the curricula, it is however clear that the more advanced courses have a clear research orientation. For instance, in ECON 4160 and ECON 4310, the competence descriptions involve the expectation that a student should 'be able to read and understand project reports and journal articles that make use of the concepts and methods that are introduced in the course' and, furthermore, 'be able to make use of the course content in your own academic work, for example…….in master's theses'. If these goals are to be met, the teaching methods necessarily have to have a clear research orientation.

### Involvement in staff research

The KOMBEVAL panel found that the learning environment is in good shape, although, given the vibrant environment that the university can offer, the panel was somewhat surprised by the rather average satisfaction of students. This may of course partly be caused by very high student expectations. However, based on the material to which the panel had access, and in line with earlier comments, it found that available potential is not being fully exploited. Relatively high effort is devoted to PhD

training (as also evidenced from the self-assessment report), while teaching at the bachelor level in particular seems to be rather extensive. The panel found that a better balance is desirable. The self-assessment report describes several nice initiatives, but does not give the panel an impression of a strong student targeted culture in which students are fully integrated in the academic (mainly research oriented) community. According to the panel, greater emphasis on including students from the first year onwards can help strengthen the link between research and education.

The self-assessment relating to research emphasizes that students are regularly exposed to staff research projects through the research-based lecturing. The department finds that many students are inspired by this and embark on a master thesis project related to their eventual supervisor's research. To stimulate this interaction, the Department of Economics has a number of student scholarships available to particularly promising students. Moreover, the department has a system in which students work one day a week as research assistants. In this way, students get the opportunity to take part in staff projects. We find that this is an excellent way to include students in research and the department should consider whether it should offer even more research assistantships, motivated by the teaching outcomes.

### 5.4.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

Combining the insights of the research and teaching evaluations it is clear that the University of Oslo has a solid set of bachelor and master programmes that are offered in a high-quality research environment. The quality of the staff and the available resources are strong. At the same time, the KOMBEVAL panel has the impression that there is an unexploited potential to deliver truly excellent programmes and points to the rather traditional nature of existing programmes and methods of teaching and assessment.

It is our assessment that the department offers a research-based programme in economics and that the students at the master’s level are exposed to the international research frontier. The curricula that we have seen describe traditional courses, which introduce the students to the research tools of economics. Furthermore, there are courses where the students are required to apply the tools to real world problems. We applaud the use of research assistants and that many students apparently end up writing theses that are research-based. Still, of course, there is always room for improvement, and we would encourage the department to further increase the interplay between teaching and research.

Overall, it is our assessment that the interplay between teaching and research is high.

## 5.5 *University of Tromsø – The Artic University of Norway*

### 5.5.1 Comparison: research and education reports

The economics research at the University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway (UiT) takes place within the faculty of Biosciences, Fisheries and Economics. The Centre for Economic Research (established in 2015) serves as an umbrella for several research sub-groups. Economic research at the NCFS is concentrated in the Marine Resource Economics group that specializes in fisheries management with emphasis on sustainable use and development. The group (five professors, one postdoc, and six doctoral students) aims at publication and conference participation in the international arena. Six research areas have priority: Behavioral economics, industrial organisation, migration and labour markets, marine ecosystem services, fisheries management, and, in the near future, also aquaculture economics.

The SAMEVAL report concludes that the scientific quality overall is good, but that there is room for improvement in research productivity as well as quality. It also observes that the small size of the faculty is well below what would constitute a critical mass. Still, the faculty is well connected to other universities.

UiT has a bachelor and a master programme in economics, both of which are relatively small. The KOMBEVAL panel wonders to what extent programmes of this size can offer the degree of specialization and in-depth knowledge that is to be expected from an academic degree. On a related note, the panel wonders whether there are resources available to sufficiently cover all the fields included in the programme.

### 5.5.2 Assessment of interplay dimensions

#### Organizational conditions

UiT has a bachelor and a master programme in economics, both of which are relatively small according to national as well as international standards (approximately 100 students in the BA programme and 17 in the MA programme). Looking at the structure of the programmes, they appear to be well structured. The KOMBEVAL panel wonders, however, to what extent programmes of this size can offer the degree of specialization and in-depth knowledge that is to be expected from an academic degree. Related, the panel wonders whether there are resources available to cover all the fields included in the programme in a sufficient manner. The programme covers basic economics as well as some business economics (marketing, etc.).

The group (five professors, one postdoc, and six doctoral students) is small and teaching is spread over several campuses (a strategy that may be questioned, given the small size of the group). We count 11 MA courses and 17 BA courses, and 15 persons involved in teaching. Overall, the organizational conditions point to a problem of small numbers.

#### Academic staff R&D orientation in relation to education

The SAMEVAL panel concluded that the level of research was good, but that critical mass was not present. Hence, the basis for offering research-based teaching is not that strong. The faculty has a

research background, but the research of the faculty does not necessarily match the content of the courses. Given the small numbers, we find this unavoidable.

### Research-based curriculum/learning research methodology

The curricula that we have seen describe traditional economics courses. The information we have is limited, but it is not our impression that the courses we have seen curricula for become really advanced. Many courses are rather basic, and it is not clear that students are brought up to the research frontier more broadly in economics.

We appreciate that it is difficult to offer a full-scale programme and that the level that the students are brought to must be limited. Still, it is our impression that many subjects and areas necessary for bringing the students to the research frontier appear to be missing in the programme. The self-assessment is candid and states that: '*All teaching is research-based, but this does not necessarily relate to a teacher's own research. However, teachers use models and examples from their own research whenever possible. There is most scope for this at the master level, since most economics research involves either formal modelling or statistical techniques that are out of reach for most bachelor students. Own research features in courses at the master level in the following courses: Applied price analysis, Advanced natural resource economics, Advanced finance, Advanced topics in economics, and Applied microeconomics, as well as the master thesis*'.

### Research orientation in teaching methods and assessment

The materials provided to us do not offer much information about teaching methods and whether there is a research orientation in teaching (see however the citation above). The description on the master thesis emphasizes that '*students often write a thesis which is directly related to the research of a staff member; often this is based upon a dataset to which the staff member has special access. The student will often analyse a research question which a staff member finds interesting, but not substantial enough for own publication. However, there are several examples of master theses that have been published as journal articles*' This is on par with what happens in many other institutions. It is a bit unclear, however, what happens if a student wishes to write a thesis outside the specializations of the faculty. Nor is it clear what the quality of the produced theses is, making it difficult to assess whether or not the perceived lack of critical mass is a problem for delivering the guidance that students need to deliver high-quality theses (a problem that may be particularly acute at the MSc level).

### Involvement in staff research

Except from the master's students working on questions relating to staff's research, neither the self-evaluation, nor other material we have seen, describes the involvement of students in research. It would be obvious to use students as research assistants, and perhaps it takes place, but we find no evidence of this in the material provided to us.

## 5.5.3 Comments on the relationship between research and education

Combining the insights of the research and teaching evaluations it is clear that small numbers pose a challenge for UiT. This is true for the faculty as well as for the number of students. The relation between research and teaching appears to be present in the limited areas where the staff is research-active, but it is (unavoidably) not very pronounced outside these areas.

Overall, it is our assessment that the degree of interplay between teaching and research is uneven across fields. In fields where the department has a research base, the degree is perhaps medium, in other fields it appears low.

It is our assessment that there is room for improvement, and we would encourage the department to further increase the interplay between teaching and research. One way to go could be to increase the use of teaching staff from other Norwegian or European universities through visiting programmes, so that the number of fields where true research-based teaching can be offered is increased and the critical mass of the research network is strengthened. Alternatively, enhancing the options for students to complete part of the curriculum at other universities (nationally or internationally) is a potentially viable option. This can be done by, for example, enabling students to do a minor of half a year at another university.

## 5.6 *Patterns across institutions*

The experience of jointly evaluating research and education and to delve deeper into the synergies has been interesting, given the complementarities and trade-offs that are at stake. Our task was not easy because of the fairly limited information that was available (a conclusion that was reached by both the SAMEVAL and the KOMBEVAL evaluation panels, and that holds even more strongly for this interplay evaluation). Our overall conclusion is therefore unavoidably somewhat general. In view of the importance that we attach to these joint evaluations, we will end our conclusions with suggestions that can strengthen the value added by evaluations like these in the future.

### Research-based education in Norway

It is our impression that much of the education in economics in Norway is delivered by high-quality scholars in their respective fields. It is also our impression that much of the teaching is still rather traditional. Classical fields are well covered, but especially the smaller programmes seem to lag somewhat behind in incorporating the most recent developments in the field. In line with international standards, students are properly trained in methodological tools that should be part of the toolkit. The real application of these tools appears – especially in the smaller programmes – to be strongly focused on the phase in which students write their thesis (bachelor or master). In the larger places (Oslo and Bergen) we see courses where the students are supposed to work on applied problems using their methodological skills. We see scope for further integration and application of research skills earlier in the curricula in the smaller programmes.

Even though there seems to be a consistent 50/50 balance between teaching and research obligations for university teachers, the incentive structure is relatively strongly geared towards research (with some notable exceptions, as described in the KOMBEVAL report). Strong and inspiring educational leadership is important to take the next step, which can foster the strengthening of a culture in which the evaluation and continuous improvement of teaching material becomes the norm. Similarly, it is important that the career system emphasises teaching as well as research.

An additional point of attention that we would like to raise is that, given the small size of the country, we see clear scope for further specialization and cooperation within the country, especially at the master level. Several of the programmes are so small that it is, in our view, virtually impossible to deliver up to the standards that we have (implicitly) in our mind when carrying out this evaluation. With programmes with less than 100 students and total staff numbers of around 10, one simply cannot expect the degree of specialization that is needed to give students (with their oftentimes heterogeneous interests) the in-depth coaching and inspiration that is needed for a research-based education. Specialization and cooperation is a natural way to expand the extent of specialization and reap the synergies that are potentially present, but not always reaped in the current functioning of the system. In addition, we see clear scope for internationalization strategies in three main directions: (i) investing in exchanges (both in- as well as outgoing; the former requiring more English taught programmes), and (ii) exchange of academics for shorter periods (which can both strengthen the research network and allow for the delivery of specialized courses by internationally leading scholars).

### Opportunities and occasions for enhancing interplay

Evidently it is mandatory to keep material and courses fully up to date with recent developments. We see this is the case in many courses, but we also found examples of the opposite. In view of recent

discussion of the state of economics education (inspired by the Great Recession), and also in view of the rapid development of ICT, it is, in our view, important to follow these discussions and use them to update the curricula (in terms of content as well as in terms of innovative teaching methods). Examples include the use of MOOCS, transitions towards concepts like flipping the classroom, integrating research experiences earlier in the curriculum, etc. Strong educational leadership can be an important driver for such a change of culture.

A second area where we see potential is opening the universities more to foreign students and foreign academics, guest lectures by people from the industry, etc. These can function, in various ways, as role models by adding experiences from other countries and can, as such, strengthen the research-based environment. Also, broadening the curricula by adding, for example, minors to incentivize students to look outside their own discipline can be a way to make students more strongly aware of the strengths and limitations of their own discipline. Finally, making students part of the research community by inviting them to seminars or offering them positions as research assistants can add value, especially at the master level.

## Conclusion

Universities should deliver research-based education. A high-quality research environment is a prerequisite for that, but not sufficient. Research-based education requires more than good researchers delivering their lectures and supervising theses. This is where, in our view, improvements are feasible and needed in Norway, and all across the world. We are convinced that, given the high quality of both the research as well as the educational programmes that are in place in the economics education, Norway is well positioned to make this step. In order to make this step, we suggest strengthening educational leadership, fostering cooperation and specialization, and opening up more strongly for international developments in curricula and for the potential of exchanges, to benefit future generations of Norwegian economists.

For future evaluations of this kind, we suggest creating more opportunities for visiting the programmes and talking to students and academic staff. Also, studying theses as important indicators of final attainment levels would be a very valuable addition that could substantially enhance the possibilities for assessing the interplay between research and education.

# 6 Conclusions

NOKUT and the RCN have received the reports from the three disciplinary panels, and structured them as sub-chapters in this overall interplay report. In this concluding chapter, we highlight some common patterns, point to differences between the disciplines, and discuss the implication of the panels' findings. Last, but not least, we will present our own reflections about the evaluation and the road ahead for future evaluations of research and education quality in Norwegian higher education. It should be noted that the observations and corresponding implications raised in this chapter are made by NOKUT and the RCN, and they should not be attributed to the panel members responsible for the previous chapters 3–5.

Before presenting the national-level findings, two reservations need to be pointed out. Firstly, it is important to note that the interplay evaluation in practice became an assessment of the influence that research quality and research activities has on educational quality and not the other way around. There are many reasons for this, and the perhaps most important one is that this line of influence – going from research to education – is intuitively assumed by most stakeholders. The literature review produced by NIFU (see chapter 2) identified several interplay quality dimensions and these where all centred around how research quality impact educational quality in higher education and not vice versa. As a result, the identified interplay indicators did not facilitate assessments of how education can be said to influence research.

Secondly, it is important to highlight that this is an evaluation of three traditional university disciplines, all with long-standing research traditions. The three disciplines are to a large extent theory-driven, and they are to a lesser degree influenced by the rapid evolution of professional practice when compared to more practice-oriented disciplines such as engineering or nursing. It is therefore necessary to underline that the generalizability of the conclusions highlighted in this chapter are limited, and also that the extent to which one can use the same evaluation model and quality dimensions for other disciplines in higher education is uncertain. This is particularly important to keep in mind when considering less theory-driven and more practice-oriented disciplines. Dimensions such as the interplay between practice and education, the importance of practice-oriented teaching and the value of having lecturers from the field of practice have hardly been considered in this evaluation, although they are arguably highly important dimensions for the quality of education in many practice-oriented disciplines.

## 6.1 *Overall assessment of interplay across political science, sociology and economics*

An important finding deriving from the first step of the interplay evaluation is that there is a large degree of overlap in the assessments of research and education. That is, institutions that receive a high score in the research evaluation also receive favourable education evaluations. With few exceptions, this pattern repeats itself across disciplines and institutions, indicating a positive relationship between research quality and educational quality. The different chapters suggest, in various ways, that a causal

relationship might exist between the two activities, i.e. that high-quality research leads to high-quality education, but the actual mechanisms at play remain uncertain.

The panels are also joint in highlighting significant differences between the BA and the MA degrees concerning research orientation in general, and in the emphasis put on research methods and size of theses in particular. The political science and sociology panels considers this gap too large, and argue that the BA level should include more methods training and that the BA theses should occupy a larger space in the programme. This is so, as argued by the sociology panel, because these are the educational activities in which research skills are developed and trained most evidently. In addition to providing sufficient amounts of methods training, the panels encourage the institutions to further integrate methods and research skills with more theoretical and/or topical courses. In other words: the BA should be more research oriented, the development of research training should start early in the study programme, and the institutions should attempt to integrate methods courses with other courses in the programme.

Another interesting observation is related to faculty size and the scale and scope of the study programmes offered. The panels observe that smaller faculties have problems offering educations with sufficient breadth of courses and areas of specialisation while at the same time ensuring that the study programmes are research based. Institutions are then faced with a choice between specializing the degree towards one or more sub-fields, ensuring a good match between the faculty's research areas and the educational offer, or keeping the broad disciplinary study program notwithstanding that some parts of the program may not be based in a research environment at the institution. The panels have recommended a larger degree of collaboration between institutions and/or specialization at the individual institutions in order to overcoming this challenge.

## 6.2 *Implications*

**The positive relationship between research quality and education quality**
The empirical data generated from the research, education, and interplay evaluations indicate that a positive relationship exist between research quality and education quality in the three disciplines included in the evaluation. The format of the evaluation – including available data, time and resources available – does not allow for making strong causal claims, and the panels themselves do not speculate on the causal mechanisms that link research quality and educational quality. This was also not the aim of the evaluation, which had the more modest ambition of knowing more about the synergies between the two activities. However, looking at the three disciplinary assessments of interplay, we find it both relevant and important to start a discussion about possible explanations.

The first, and perhaps most intuitive explanation that stand out from the report is that high quality research environments ensure research based education. That is, institutions with high-quality research environments are more likely to have the knowledge and resources necessary to ensure research-based study programmes in the broad understanding of the word. This means that the institution can deliver education that is both research-tutored, research-based, research-led, and research-oriented (Healey 2005, see page 10, this report). Put differently, the education contains elements of all, or close to all, of Kyvik and Vågans' seven interpretations of research-based education (see page 10, this report). In

contrast, education offered at institutions that score lower on research quality is likely to be research-based in a narrower sense. This explanation implies that the inherent characteristics of a high quality research environments ensure research-based education, which in turn leads to high-quality education.

There are, however, explanations that do not centre on the high quality research environment per se, but rather on associated characteristics. We know from the data material for the research and education evaluations that the institutions with high-quality research are the institutions that attract the strongest students measured in grade points from higher secondary education. These students may raise the level of the education through more engaged participation, demands and results. As such, it is not the high quality research that causes high quality education, but the highly selected students. It is also notable that, although with some minor exceptions, the institutions that have high research quality have longer traditions in offering educations in the three disciplines political science, sociology and economics. It is not unlikely that experience over time has a positive influence on the quality of the study programme.

These suggested explanations are not mutually exclusive, and it is likely that they reinforce each other. The combination of a high-quality research environment, an experienced and resourceful educational leadership and study administration, and students with the necessary motivation and skills to both advance their own knowledge and to contribute to the development of the study programme itself through critical engagement is likely to significantly strengthen the quality of the education.

**The importance of researchers as lecturers**

In order to ensure a broad research base for study programmes, it appears critical that involved lecturers are active researchers themselves. This is not to say that lecturers must be researchers to ensure research-based education, as there are many roads to ensure a (narrow) research base. However, if a programme aims at delivering high-quality education, which is likely to necessitate a research base in the broad understanding of the term, ensuring that the lecturers are active researches themselves seems decisive.

To highlight the seeming decisiveness of researchers as lecturers is not to say that all researchers are automatically good lecturers. Being a good lecturer is likely to also depend upon other factors, such as pedagogical training, communication skills, sufficient time for preparation, adequate educational facilities and a supportive network of peers/colleagues. However, having research experience – and ideally being an active researcher – appears to be a necessary condition (although not sufficient in and of itself) for providing research-based education in a competent way, according to many observations highlighted in this report.

**Faculty size**

According to the panels, sociology, political science and economics education require a sizeable and research active faculty in order to provide the breadth of substantive courses, methods training and specialization that these disciplines require. This does not necessarily mean that smaller faculty size should prevent an institution from offering the degree, but the organization and structure of the degree should mirror the faculty's research competence. Not taking research competence into consideration when planning the study programme risks 'stretching thin', i.e. study programmes with uneven quality of courses.

As already mentioned, the panels raised several options for amending small faculty size/limited research base, such as cooperation between institutions or focusing the degree towards one or more sub-disciplines

**Boosting research orientation at the BA level**
Another important assessment the panels have made, is that there is a real need to boost the research orientation of the bachelor programmes that have participated in this evaluations. The panels suggests three interlinked ways to do this. First, the programmes need to include more methodology training early in the bachelor programmes. The programmes should also integrate more methodology training into the more substantive courses, and finally, many of the programmes should increase the demands for the bachelor thesis. An important reason for this suggestion is that methodological training is more than an academic exercise, it is a critical way to increase the students' generic skills, which make candidates more attractive on the labour market.

To NOKUT this is particularly interesting when one considers the regulations institutions must meet to accredit bachelor, master and PhD programmes. Though by law, all higher education must be research based, the requirements regarding the research competence of the faculty providing a bachelor programme are lower than for a master degree. The assessments made in this evaluation for the disciplines of political science, sociology and economics clearly question this logic.

## 6.3 *Lessons learned for future interplay evaluations*

NOKUT and the RCN can draw several lessons based on this pilot evaluation.

First, it is clear that to assess the quality of education one needs to assess the broad research base of said study programme. It is necessary, but not enough, to look at the individual lecturers' education or CV. The evaluation also needs to assess the way in which the programme is designed, the curriculum, the amount, content and timing of methodological training, and the nature of the bachelor and master theses.

Second, in order to evaluate more efficiently research and educational quality and the interplay between the two, the evaluation should be more integrated. In the current evaluation, the units that have been evaluated in the research evaluation and education evaluation are not the same. That is, in the research evaluation, the RCN have evaluated the different disciplines at the institutional level, while NOKUT has focused on the different study programmes. In the future, the units should be better aligned. One should also consider using one expert panel for the entirety of the evaluation. As is described above, the interplay evaluation has been done by one member of the education panel and one member of the research panel. The panellist themselves have indicated that it would be beneficial for one panel to assess research, education, and interplay quality all together, rather than to split it up into three different evaluations with different panels.

Third, NOKUT and the RCN need to think about how we in the future can assess the impact education has on research and not only the other way around.

Finally, if the model piloted in this project would be set in motion in a new large-scale evaluation, NOKUT and the RCN, for the benefit of the participating institutions and panel members, need to improve the coordination of the evaluation.

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