

# TILSYNS- RAPPORT

2021

## **PhD in Communication and Leadership**

Kristiania University College (Høyskolen  
Kristiania)



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<b>Degree/ECTS</b>	PhD / 180 ECTS
<b>Expert committee</b>	Inger G. Stensaker, Ralph Tench, Ewa Wikström and Jessica Yarin Robinson
<b>Decision date</b>	Desember 16, 2021
<b>Case number</b>	20/09913

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## Preface

The external quality assurance performed by NOKUT consists of a periodic supervision of the institutions' systematic work on assuring and enhancing the quality of the education they offer, accreditation of new provisions and revision of accredited provisions. Universities and university colleges have different self-accrediting powers. For an institution without self-accrediting powers to establish a provision in a certain cycle an application must be made to NOKUT.

An expert committee appointed by NOKUT has evaluated the application from Kristiania University College (Høyskolen Kristiania) for the accreditation of PhD in Communication and Leadership and their assessments are found in this report.

**The PhD in Communication and Leadership at Kristiania University College (Høyskolen Kristiania) does fulfil the conditions for accreditation in the Quality Assurance Regulation in Higher Education and the Ministerial Regulations concerning quality assurance and quality development in higher education and tertiary vocational education. The provision is accredited 16 December 2021.**

Øystein Lund

Director of the Department for Quality Assurance and Legal Affairs

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# 1 Information regarding the applicant institution

Kristiania University College (KUC, Norwegian: Høgskolen Kristiania – Ernst G Mortensens Stiftelse) is a private university college, organised as a foundation. The institution's quality assurance system was evaluated and approved by NOKUT in 2021.

KUC has around 600 employees and 14 000 students (numbers from 2020) and offers around 120 bachelor's and master's degree programmes, as well as several one-year programmes and continuing education. The two campuses of KUC are located in the city centres of Oslo and Bergen. KUC is organised in the following four schools:

- the School of Communication, Leadership and Marketing (SCLM)
- the School of Health Sciences (SHS)
- the School of Economics, Innovation and Technology (SEIT)
- the School of Arts, Design and Media (SADM)

Each school is headed by a dean who is supported by a management group, which includes the heads of the school's departments. KUC has no accredited PhD programmes. Upon accreditation of their first PhD programme, KUC will create a fifth school, the PhD School, with its own dean.

As an accredited university college, Kristiania University College (KUC) does not have power of self-accreditation for educational provisions in the second (master's degree) and third cycle (PhD). KUC applied for accreditation of the PhD in Communication and Leadership by the application deadline of 1. November 2020.

## The University College's description of the programme and grounds for the application

The foundation of the PhD programme in Communication and Leadership is found in the School of Communication, Leadership and Marketing (SCLM). The programme will also draw on resources from the other three schools. The two most central departments in SCLM will be the Department of Communication and the Department of Leadership and Organisation. The academic community behind the application is recruited from all four existing schools and their research groups. Furthermore, KUC plans to recruit candidates from study programmes from all four schools to the PhD programme.

In the application KUC writes:

The backdrop of the programme is the fundamental changes in societal and organisational conditions caused by the fourth industrial revolution and by the contemporary challenges confronting the world. In order to understand, explain and develop skills for handling such changes, a holistic academic approach is required. The aim is therefore to study private and public organisations and their members as well as the interaction and interdependencies of business, society and government from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Organisations and policy makers need knowledge to address these changes practically, and the PhD programme aims at serving this need by connecting academic research to societal challenges in a way that has impact for organisations. The processes of Communication and Leadership and their applications in various fields and disciplines are as such central.

This programme is seen as interdisciplinary, which means integrating Communication and Leadership to give more comprehensive perspectives.

New and research-based knowledge is needed for understanding, explaining and developing answers to contemporary societal and organisational challenges engendered by late modernity macro traits, such as globalisation, digitalisation, increased risk and the quest for sustainability. Given the intricacy of such challenges, interdisciplinary knowledge is necessary to address them successfully. From an academic perspective, there is also a need for connecting disciplines separated by over-specialisation but actually sharing a common core – how to create agency and common meaning at and between different levels, especially at organisational and societal levels. For these reasons, our proposed PhD programme is interdisciplinary, connecting Communication and Leadership to other relevant disciplines and research topics. Our programme will be situated within the social sciences and humanities, both theoretically and methodologically speaking. It draws on traditional disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, anthropology, political science, organisational science, sociology, literature, linguistics, art, music and history and on specialisations that emerged during the last century such as management, media studies, political communication, strategic communication, innovation, entrepreneurship and marketing. It also draws on a broad range of quantitative and qualitative methods, such as ethnography, auto-ethnography, discursive analysis, time studies and action research as well as multimethod approaches. Our aim is to contribute to training qualified candidates who conduct high-level research and develop important knowledge within Communication and Leadership. The candidates will be trained in critical, speculative, interpretive, constructive, discursive, applied, descriptive or phenomenological perspectives whilst at the same time maintaining a focus on the practical implications for policy and decision makers. This will also entail increased collaboration between higher educational institutions and the private and public sectors, and our aim is to contribute with important research in this respect.

## 2 Decision

NOKUT's Board made the following decision on 16 December 2021:

The PhD programme in Communication and Leadership at Kristinaia University College satisfies all requirements for accreditation and the programme is accredited.

The original decision in Norwegian:

*Ph.d.-studiet i kommunikasjon og ledelse ved Høyskolen Kristiania tilfredsstiller alle krav til akkreditering. Studiet akkrediteres.*

*Vedtaket er fattet med hjemmel i:*

- *NOKUTs forskrift om tilsyn med utdanningskvaliteten i høyere utdanning av 9. februar 2017*
- *forskrift om kvalitetssikring og kvalitetsutvikling i høyere utdanning og fagskoleutdanning av 1. februar 2010*

## 3 Expert assessment

This chapter is the expert committee's assessment. The term "we" refers to the expert committee as such.

### 3.1 Summary of the report

The overall impression of the expert committee, based on the written application and the site visit, is that KUC has put substantial resources and effort into crafting the PhD programme within the area of communication and leadership.

Based on the application and the site visit, the committee understands the programme as interdisciplinary in the sense that it seeks clear linkages between the fields of communication and leadership. The leadership aspect is a way of narrowing in so that communication does not entail everything. The programme aims to cover organisational leadership and political leadership in a broad sense.

The programme is firmly based within the School of Communication, Leadership and Marketing, yet will recruit from and involve the other 3 schools, thus aiming for multidisciplinary.

The committee sees several strengths of the proposed programme:

- All schools appear highly committed to making this happen and contributing to its success. There is not only commitment, but also considerable enthusiasm around the programme's potential to advance interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary cooperation within the staff. Academic staff across the various fields see the programme as something that brings them together around a common interest, and they report KUC is already resistant to silos. Particularly the site visit showed that many ambassadors within KUC are prepared to actively recruit students internally and within the broader network (also internationally).
- Faculty, students and industry explained how a core value and practice at KUC is the close collaboration with industry. It allows students to connect with potential employers, to get real-life problems they can explore in their class projects, master's theses and PhD projects, and it can provide access to study communication and leadership in practice, and potential employment and/or connections with employers.
- Students are enthusiastic about the programme and those engaged already with PhD studies at KUC expressed high satisfaction levels with current programmes. They are provided with the resources, support and processes that allow them to build a strong community, and they feel integrated into the faculty and ongoing research projects through co-authoring, close supervision, co-location, and resources to build their own networks.
- Industry partners see the need for the programme and could clearly explain the logic behind the vision of building a PhD programme around communication AND leadership.

The committee also sees some weaknesses of the programme:

- The fields of communication and leadership are broadly defined, and the committee spent quite a bit of time during the site visit attempting to get a clearer understanding of the boundaries around the programme. The site visit convinced us that there is a richness in the broadness and inclusiveness, which currently seems to bind the various research centres and schools together. The close connection and contribution to the field of practice also binds the various parts of KUC together around the ambitions for the PhD programme. The openness and focus on combining academic rigour with practical relevance does hold potential for novel and insightful contributions to the field of communication and leadership. However, over time, it will be important to develop a clearer sense of what distinguishes this programme from other similar programmes in the market. This is particularly important to provide clarity and align expectations with current and potential recruits onto the programme.
- The interdisciplinary (and multidisciplinary) nature of the programme is not yet clearly reflected in the courses and the requirements for admission. However, the site visit suggests that the courses and ongoing research programmes are indeed interdisciplinary (and to a certain extent multidisciplinary). The committee would like to see this reflected in course titles, descriptions, and admission requirements to ensure that the goals of inter/multidisciplinarity are upheld.

#### **Power of accreditation**

Although the PhD programme expects to recruit from a broad base of master's programmes, the accreditation of the PhD programme will not open up for self-accreditation in such a broad manner. Self-accreditation at lower levels will be limited to programmes that fall clearly within the fields of communication and/or leadership.

#### Summary after the response from the institution to the initial report

The institution has made a number of adjustments to the course portfolio which are described in further detail in point 3.4.4. Taken together these adjustments have focused the course portfolio and strengthened the content of the PhD program to better and more clearly reflect the interdisciplinary (and multidisciplinary) nature of the programme. Overall, the committee is very satisfied with the response from the institution. The requirements and suggestions have been dealt with in a serious and constructive manner which has resulted in a well-defined and innovative course portfolio. With the changes made to the course portfolio and diploma supplement, the committee finds that all the requirements are satisfactorily met and recommends accreditation of the PhD program in Communication and Leadership at KUC.

#### **3.1.1 The doctoral degree programme's field of study**

The fields of study are communication and leadership as applied to the social science or humanities areas. The fields communication and leadership are in this programme positioned within the research areas of the School of Communication, Leadership and Marketing but the different PhD projects could lean towards specialisations, for example 'media and political communication', 'communication and leadership in health care', and



‘art and design’. Communication and leadership are scientific disciplines in which scientific knowledge is used to find solutions to challenges associated with changes in societal and organisational conditions. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are also important in communication and leadership studies. Together these disciplines help solve local and global problems related to societal and organisational changes.

This programme blends or combines disciplines in two ways: interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary. The interdisciplinary perspective comes from the intersection of communication and leadership. The multidisciplinary dimension of the programme comes from the collaboration across KUC’s different schools. Thus, projects address the intersection of communication and leadership, but may apply these perspectives to cases within health, sports, creative industries, and other sectors researched at KUC.

Accreditation of a PhD programme gives institutions the power to establish new study programmes in the first and second cycle within the fields of study of the doctoral degree programme without applying to NOKUT. The definitions of the fields of study (communication and leadership) and the programme itself are firmly based within the School of Communication, Leadership and Marketing. Though the programme will recruit from and involve the other 3 schools at KUC, the committee views the boundaries around self-accrediting powers as limited to the foundation of the programme: communication and leadership. Self-accreditation should not extend more broadly across the various schools. For instance, the accreditation of a PhD programme in Communication and Leadership does not automatically allow for self-accreditation within master’s programmes in fields such as applied public health, training science or information systems.

## 3.2 Basic prerequisites for accreditation

### 3.2.1 Demands expressed in the Universities and College Act

#### Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-1 (4) It is a condition for accreditation being granted that the requirements of the Universities and University Colleges Act are met. Regulations adopted under the authority of Section 3-2 of the Universities and University Colleges Act shall form the basis for the accreditation.

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-1 (1) The requirements of the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges and its corresponding regulations must be met.

### Assessment

#### Regulations

The PhD programme is permitted by the Act relating to universities and university colleges (University and University Colleges Act), Ministerial Regulations concerning quality assurance and quality development in higher education and tertiary vocational education (Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education), Quality Assurance Regulation in Higher Education (Academic Supervision Regulations), and also the Regulations on the degrees philosophiae doctor (PhD) and philosophiae doctor in artistic development work at Kristiania University College (PhD regulations) when this is decided and announced in lovdata.no. The former regulation is based on the Norwegian Universities (UHR) guidelines

from 2018, for the degrees philosophiae doctor (PhD) and philosophiae doctor (PhD) in artistic research.

The PhD regulations include provisions regarding admission and the PhD agreement, execution and completion of the PhD programme, and provisions related to the right of appeals.

### **Diploma**

The PhD regulations state that when the training component and all parts of the doctoral examination have been approved by the University College, the degree of philosophiae doctor (PhD) will be awarded. In compliance with the University and University College Act section 3-11, a PhD diploma is issued by the University College. The diploma contains information about the academic training the candidate has participated in, the title of the thesis, the examination on an assigned topic, and the academic supervisors. The diploma is signed by the rector. KUC has provided a template of the Diploma Supplement (DS) that follows the standards in The Common Student System (Norwegian: Felles studentsystem, FS). In addition to the diploma and DS, the doctor will receive a PhD diploma signed by the rector.

The information in the diploma and the diploma supplement provided by KUC is sufficient. We note however that point 3.1 in the diploma supplement refers to the second cycle. This needs to be corrected.

### **Quality assurance**

The quality assurance system was revised in 2019 and approved by NOKUT in 2021. The quality assurance system has a common structure for all units at the institution and includes all study programmes. KUC has a separate description of the system and a handbook (PhD Handbook) for the PhD programmes, based on the PhD regulations. The system description describes the roles and responsibilities for different phases of the quality assurance work. The PhD handbook contains several templates, routines, and procedures for the administration of the PhD programmes. The documents will be available at specific webpages at the website of Kristiania University College. These webpages will be an addition to the webpages that describe other important aspects of research support, such as research ethics, library services etc.

The Board has the overall responsibility of the quality assurance at KUC. The Board adopts the regulations governing the PhD degree at KUC and determines the administrative organisation. The Board decides whether application must be made for accreditation and approval of a PhD programme and determines which school will be the host for the programme.

Other central boards, councils and functions that are particularly relevant for the PhD programmes:

#### *Rector*

has the overall academic responsibility at KUC. The rector appoints members to the doctoral degree committee on commission of the Board and awards the doctoral degree.

#### *Dean of PhD School*

has the overall responsibility for the PhD School at KUC and thereby the overall responsibility for the quality of study programmes at the PhD level.

#### *Doctoral degree committee*

is chaired by the Dean of the PhD School and has the academic and administrative responsibility for coordination of the PhD programmes across host schools. The committee consists of representatives from each of the different doctoral programmes, the academic staff, Head of Research administration, Pro-rector Research and Artistic Development and representatives among the PhD candidates. The secretary of the committee is appointed by the rector and is responsible for assuring quality of recruitment of candidates and admissions process. Furthermore, the committee shall ensure that the supervisors have sufficient formal expertise and capacity to attend to the candidates that are admitted to the programme.

*The programme committee*

makes recommendations regarding admission and processes the final project description. The committee is responsible for the follow-up of the candidate's association with relevant academic environments.

*Dean of host School*

is responsible for ensuring that KUC has academically relevant research groups and research projects in doctoral-level educational programmes and shall ensure that candidates have access to relevant infrastructure. The dean is responsible for the annual employee appraisal interviews with the candidates and the annual quality report from the PhD School. The Dean should provide input to the members of the doctoral degree committee and nominate members to the programme committee.

*Head of PhD programme*

is the academic leader of the programme and reports to Dean of the PhD School. The head of PhD programme coordinates the training component and develops cooperation with other institutions.

*Doctoral degree committee's secretariat (R&D administration)*

is responsible for coordinating procedures in the PhD programmes and are the contact persons for candidates, supervisors and others who have queries about the institution's PhD programmes.

*Quality department*

is responsible for routines and follow-up of quality assurance of the training component in cooperation with the doctoral degree committee.

*Study administration*

is responsible for study-related administrative functions that are independent of the level of the educational programme, such as FS, issuance of diplomas, conducting examinations etc.

The PhD handbook includes more detailed descriptions of the roles and responsibilities.

Overall, the committee finds the quality assurance system to be clear and comprehensive. It provides a thorough description of roles and responsibilities. Once KUC has some experience on how this works in practice, they may want to consider if such a complex (top-heavy) organisation is necessary given the size of the PhD programme. On the other hand, if additional PhD programmes are developed, the structure can be both necessary and beneficial.

**Admission requirements**

The admission requirements are as follows:

- A relevant national or international master's degree in social science or the humanities, such as within media and/or communication, leadership, management, human resources, organisational science, business, economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy, marketing, information systems, history, linguistics, art, music, innovation, entrepreneurship, health. Recruitment from such a broad range of master's programmes will potentially foster both inter- and multi-disciplinarity.
- A master's thesis of minimum 30 ECTS within the master's degree.
- An experience-based master's degree (90 ECTS) alone does not qualify.
- The applicant must have a strong academic background from previous studies and normally have a weighted average grade in the last two years of the master's degree programme (or equivalent education) as well as a master's thesis equal to B or better compared to the KUC grade scale.

Applicants with poorer academic records may be admitted if particular suitability can be documented.

Overall, the committee regards these admissions requirements as sufficient to ensure that the admitted students will be of a high academic quality. A project description (research proposal) is often required as a part of the application to a PhD programme, yet this is not explicitly stated in the KUC application. A research proposal can provide important additional information on the applicant's ability to frame relevant and "doable" research problems as well as their understanding of what it means to do research. It is typically further developed (and adjusted) in the actual PhD process, so it is not a contractual format, but is an important input in the recruitment process. The institution is advised to make the requirements for project descriptions more explicit.

The institution is required to:

- Correct the DS. The DS refers under point 3.1 to the second cycle. The correct reference is the third cycle.

#### Assessment after the response from the institution to the initial report

The DS has been corrected accordingly and refers to the third cycle. The DS is also updated with the new course titles.

#### **Conclusion**

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Review the quality assurance structure of the programme in the future. The quality assurance and organisation of the programme is impressive and quite comprehensive. Once KUC has some experience on how this works in practice, they may want to consider if such a complex (top-heavy) organisation is necessary given the size of the PhD programme. On the other hand, if additional PhD programmes are developed, the structure can be both necessary and beneficial.
- Make the requirements for project descriptions more explicit.

### 3.2.2 Information about the programme

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-1 (2) Information provided about the programme must be correct and show the programme's content, structure and progression, as well as opportunities for student exchanges.

#### **Assessment**

The content and scope of the programme, the study plan, and course descriptions are outlined in attachment 1 of the application. Students are expected to have 30 ECTS in coursework and complete a PhD thesis worth 150 ECTS. Mandatory courses include those on ethics and research methods, with elective courses available on communication and leadership topics. The course structure is detailed in the table on p. 8 of attachment 1a in the application. The course descriptions are in attachment 1b. These include course learning outcomes, exam type, and reading lists. A suggested progress plan is described in Table 6 of the main application (p. 35).

Internationalisation is addressed on p. 12 of attachment 1a. The section states that candidates will be encouraged to take research trips of up to 6 months, and that KUC has established agreements with several institutions (these agreements are documented in attachments 2 and 3).

The information provided about the programme is detailed and thorough overall. The programme description in attachment 1 could however clearly explain that the programme is not only interdisciplinary (between communication and leadership) but also multidisciplinary, in that candidates may be based and have their advisers in schools other than SCLM.

#### **Conclusion**

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Clarify for prospective applicants that the programme is a multidisciplinary collaboration and that PhD projects may be housed at any of the schools, depending on how they apply the concepts of communication and leadership.

### 3.3 Demands to the doctoral degree programme's field of study

#### **3.3.1 The programme's field of study shall constitute a scientific whole**

#### Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-3 (2) The doctoral degree programme's field of study shall constitute a scientific whole, and the individual parts that make up the programme shall be internally coherent.

## Assessment

The main research topics of the programme are communication and leadership.

Globalisation, digitalisation, and the exploitation of natural and human resources pose new challenges for both leadership and communication. The goal of the programme is to develop new knowledge on the role communication plays in these changes, with special attention to professional actors such as platform providers, media companies and policy makers.

Leadership studies can produce new ways of thinking about leadership issues and dilemmas. While the traditional approach to leadership studies draws mainly on functionalism, positivism and quantitative methods, more interpretive, constructive, discursive, and phenomenological perspectives are increasingly influential. These directions will be further explored in the programme.

The application links leadership and communication to innovation and change, and while relevant across sectors, some specific sectors that match KUC's state-of-the-art research are pointed out: creative industries, public health industry, media industry, sports management, state governance, travel and tourism.

The intersection between the fields of study (communication and leadership) defines the interdisciplinary perspective of the programme. The definitions of communication and leadership in the application are broad and varied. In the application the introduction to the fields started out in a rather instrumental approach, but then included more cultural and processual elements. Overall, the committee sees that the programme constitutes a significant whole, but advises KUC to clarify and be explicit about the different perspectives/theoretical approaches to communication and leadership and with time develop a better idea of the specific approach(es) taken by KUC researchers.

The fields communication and leadership are in this programme positioned within the research areas of the School of Communication, Leadership and Marketing, but the different PhD projects could lean towards specialisations in for example 'media and political communication', 'communication and leadership in health care', and 'art and design'. Appendix/attachment 1a provides explanations of how the different PhD courses emphasise either communication or leadership, but the interdisciplinarity of the fields is not highlighted, see section 3.3.4.

## Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Clarify and be explicit about the different perspectives/theoretical approaches to communication and leadership and with time develop a better idea of the specific approach(es) taken by KUC researchers.

### 3.3.2 Quality and scope of the education and research

#### Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-3 (1) The institution shall offer education and research in the doctoral programme's field of study of a quality and scope that ensure that the programme can be completed at a high academic level. The institution shall offer a wide range of first and second-level degree programmes within the doctoral degree programme's field of study.

#### **Assessment**

The academic environment within KUC is rich with a large number of bachelor's (32) and master's (8) programmes in what the applicants claim are relevant programmes of study and whose graduates are seen as targets for the PhD programme's recruitment. The bachelor's programmes in the last two years have produced 1,468 graduates and the master's programmes 159 graduates from three programmes; the remaining 5 master's programmes are too new to have graduates. These bachelor's and master's programmes are of sufficient relevance to the communication and leadership fields to provide a foundation of study for the PhD programme. The bachelor's and master's programmes also have the disciplinary stretch to meet the interest and aspiration KUC has for recruiting students who have an interest in the way communication and leadership have an impact on a broad range of areas. This does provide a strong recruitment base for the programme from KUC's own alumni as well as from outside the institution.

The academic expertise in communication and leadership is argued to come from across the four Schools at KUC which match and mirror the inter- and multidisciplinary nature of the programme. Despite the breadth of disciplinary input into the programme, the programme is mainly grounded in SCLM. This school is strong in terms of the programme focus and has a sound basis to build the doctoral programme upon. The programme will be managed by a new PhD School with its own dean. There is good evidence of an evolving and developing research culture represented by the research groups across the Faculty, particularly highlighted in Leadership and Organisation and the Communication Research Group (fACT).

The PhD programme focuses on communication and leadership with evidence of disciplinary competence and capability in these fields from the staff CVs provided. The programme's focus recognises the evolving and changing landscape of work in the field of communication with the impact of globalisation and mediatization especially highlighted, alongside macro societal changes and challenges linked to the environment.

KUC argues that the specific practitioner links they have relate to the creative industries, health, media, sport, government, travel and tourism. This was well supported by the panel of 'employers' during the site visit who all had a clear understanding of the PhD programme and saw significant potential for the candidates graduating from the programme. These interviews demonstrated solid support from the employment sector as well as answering questions on how evidenced-based research and specialisation insight would be useful to practitioners. The discussions with the employers reinforced how practice-based links could support candidates and be useful for empirical exploration. The committee advises KUC to continue engaging with communities of practice in the areas of specialisation for research, project opportunities and ultimately employment for candidates.

## Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled

The institution is advised to:

- Continue engaging with communities of practice in the areas of specialisation for research, project opportunities and ultimately employment for candidates.

## 3.4 Demands to the educational provision

### 3.4.1 Learning outcome and title of programme

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (1) The learning outcomes for the programme must be in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, and the programme must have an appropriate title.

## Assessment

The learning outcomes of the PhD programme are listed on pages 24-25 of the main application and are also stated in appendix 1 in this report.

*Learning outcomes:* The learning outcomes adhere to those stated in the National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (NQF), with some modifications appropriate to the content of this programme. Candidates who complete the programme will have knowledge, skills, and competence in *both* communication and leadership, reflecting that the programme is aimed at the intersection of these disciplines. The outcomes also emphasise how this intersection is related to societal and organisational phenomena, reflecting that candidates may look beyond the organisational and management levels of communication and leadership, and consider other applications of these disciplines. Finally, the learning outcomes have been modified from the NQF to state that candidates will be able to communicate their research not only to academic audiences, but in a way that supports policy makers, industry, and organisations, reflecting KUC's close alignment with practitioners and its mission to address real-world problems practitioners face.

Overall, we find these outcomes to be appropriate for the programme. However, one of the learning outcomes is a bit ambiguous. Regarding methodological knowledge the candidate should have, it states "application of different methods, quantitative *or* qualitative" (emphasis added). It is not a NOKUT requirement that this programme's learning outcomes include knowledge of both methodological approaches. However, as we discuss in other sections of this report, the committee encourages KUC to have a goal that candidates will obtain knowledge of both quantitative *and* qualitative research methods in order to prepare them for today's research environment.

*Programme name:* The application explains the rationale for the title PhD in Communication and Leadership (in Norwegian: ph.d. i kommunikasjon og ledelse) on pages 25-26. In this section the applicants write that the placement of terms, with communication preceding leadership, is meaningful because "leadership and communication" would imply communication that's within leadership only and this programme is meant to encompass a broader application of communication. This section also notes that in Norwegian, *ledelse* (leadership) implies the concept of management as well, but in translating the name to



English, the applicants felt Communication, Leadership, and Management would be too cumbersome.

During the site visit, we sought to assess the title and what it implied about the scope of study. We asked several panels if a PhD in *Strategic Communication* would better reflect the forms of communication candidates would research; such a title would conceivably include leadership and management arenas, as well as wider political and organisational applications. Kristiania's leadership, academic staff, and even the prospective employers we talked to, however, said that *strategic communication* would lose important features of the programme. They saw strategic communication as an already established and specific subfield, and such a title would narrow the scope. While strategic communication studies may be important in this programme, the people we talked with said PhD candidates should have room to explore the wider and as yet less established implications of the intersection of communication and leadership. Based on these responses and our understanding of the programme's mission and content, we agree that Communication and Leadership is an appropriate title.

## Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Clearly communicate in the learning outcomes to what degree candidates will be expected to have knowledge of qualitative *and* quantitative methods.

### 3.4.2 The programmes's academic update and professional relevance

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (2) The programme must be academically up-to-date and have clear academic relevance for further studies and/or employment.

## Assessment

In the application it is stated that the programme aims to build on the forefront of research, and the curriculum will be continuously updated and revised. Candidates are expected to write either a monograph or a paper-based thesis with papers published in or submitted to high-quality peer-reviewed international journals. The publication process will ensure feedback from and interaction with the global academic community.

The PhD candidates are encouraged to conduct research which relates to current research projects at KUC, much of which is conducted in close collaboration with industry.

Graduates of the PhD programme are expected to enter the workforce in one of three areas – faculty positions at universities, public sector positions, or private sector positions. The Norwegian Federation of Service Industries and Retail Trade (NHO-SH) and Parat have entered into collaboration agreements with KUC.

The programme appears academically up to date with staff (partly newly recruited) that is actively involved in research within the core fields of communications and leadership. While the application fails to clearly define and delineate communication and leadership as academic fields, the site visit revealed that academic faculty have given the focus and the

interdisciplinary nature of the programme considerable thought and they express a number of intriguing ideas on novel research that can emerge from the programme.

This suggests that the broad perspective on communication and leadership can be beneficial (especially in this early phase) in its ability to mobilise staff and students across schools and disciplines. It can also generate valuable insights precisely because of its openness. However, the broad approach will also require increasing clarity and explicit statements about what perspectives are taken and where the researchers embed their work (what existing research literatures/theories?). We anticipate that such clarity will evolve over time and we encourage the academic staff to regularly reflect on the direction the research takes to ensure that the inter- (and multi-) disciplinary nature is maintained while a core perspective (or several) on communication and leadership may emerge.

The academic staff have organised research activities within research groups that cut across schools and departments. The research groups appear actively involved with national and international networks within their respective topics and fields. PhD students are strongly encouraged to join research groups and to formulate research proposals that are linked to ongoing research. The committee views this as important both for ensuring professional relevance and for creating a good learning environment where senior and junior researchers can collaborate, which there is already evidence of.

The staff hold close relationships with industry and introduce PhD students and master's students into these networks. As such the practical relevance of the doctoral programme and the attractiveness of PhD candidates for industry is secured. It is, however, not clear in the application if and how candidates are prepared for an academic career involving teaching as well as research. We inquired whether candidates will be invited or expected to teach during the site visit. The applicants told us that this will be established on a project-by-project basis to allow for different funding frameworks. The committee advises KUC to ensure that the PhD candidates also obtain relevant training for an academic career, such as teaching and supervision experience.

## Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Regularly reflect on the direction the research takes to ensure that the inter- (and multi-) disciplinary nature is maintained while a core perspective (or several) on communication and leadership may emerge.
- Ensure that the PhD candidates also obtain relevant training for an academic career, such as teaching and supervision experience.

### 3.4.3 The programme's workload

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (3) The total workload of the programme must be between 1,500 and 1,800 hours per year for full-time students.

### Assessment

This is a three-year programme. Candidates are expected to work 1,800 hours per year, or 900 hours per semester. The application states that the class workload will be heavier in the initial period of the programme, and toward the latter stages candidates will work more independently on their project. The application also states that candidates will have access to pedagogy courses.

The workload for the programme is within the acceptable range and the learning outcomes appear to be achievable within the time allotted.

### Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

### 3.4.4 The programme's content, structure and infrastructure

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (4) The programme's content, structure and infrastructure must be adapted to the programme's learning outcomes.

### Assessment

The PhD programme is viewed as integrating communication and leadership at varying degrees depending on the specifics of each project. As such the balance between the two may vary in priority and focus. To achieve this, the programme includes mandatory and elective courses. The planned electives are appropriate and will provide diversity and interest. Candidates will take two mandatory courses – research ethics (10 ECTS) and either a qualitative or quantitative research methods course (5 ECTS). We recommend KUC to consider whether all candidates would benefit from a diverse research methods training experience irrespective of the chosen study approach, and perhaps allow for both qualitative and quantitative research methods electives/training in the future.

Candidates will also take three elective courses (5 ECTS each). The candidates may choose from nine proposed elective courses at KUC (Contemporary issues in Communication Research, Contemporary issues in Leadership and Management, Media and Political Communication, Organisational communication, Communication and Leadership in Health Care, Change Management and Organisational Learning, Practical and Critical Perspectives on Leadership and Management, Sustainable Change and Entrepreneurship, Value creation: A Multidisciplinary Perspective). Compared with the initial intake number of PhD candidates there are a lot of electives and they could be rationalised depending on the uptake.

KUC describes the programme as interdisciplinary and according to the learning outcomes candidates who complete the programme will have knowledge, skills, and competence in *both* communication and leadership, reflecting that the programme is aimed at the intersection of these disciplines. Appendix/attachment 1a in the application provides explanations of how the different PhD courses emphasise either communication or leadership, but the interdisciplinarity of the fields is not highlighted.

The interdisciplinary (and multidisciplinary) nature of the programme is not yet clearly reflected in the courses. However, the site visit suggests that the courses and ongoing

research programmes are indeed interdisciplinary (and to a certain extent multidisciplinary). The committee would like to see this reflected in course titles, descriptions and reading lists to ensure that the goals of inter/multidisciplinarity are upheld. KUC is required to revise course titles, descriptions and reading lists to ensure that the goals of inter/multidisciplinarity, as also stated in the learning outcomes, are upheld and clearly communicated to students.

Overall, the programme's structure and content are logical and well connected to the stated learning outcomes. We encourage KUC to ensure the PhD courses are flexible enough that candidates can make useful connections between the course content and their PhD project. The interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of the programme means that elective courses in particular may not be perfectly aligned with the projects of each candidate. Although not a regulatory requirement, candidates should ideally be able to tailor their exam papers to their research projects so that these papers will be useful even after the course ends.

The thesis for this programme can be in the form of a traditional monograph or a research paper-based output. This approach does set a standard for the candidates but is also reflective of the level of the PhD which requires the creation of originality and new knowledge.

The infrastructure such as library services and access to sufficient and relevant databases and journals seems to be adapted to the programme.

The institution is required to:

- Revisit the course portfolio and revise course titles, descriptions and reading lists to ensure that the goals of inter/multidisciplinarity, as also stated in the learning outcomes, are upheld and clearly communicated to students.

#### Assessment after the response from the institution to the initial report

A number of adjustments have been made in the course portfolio to focus the program and underscore its interdisciplinary nature. Titles have been revised to signal interdisciplinarity, one course has been removed from the program, and two courses have been merged to bridge leadership and communication topics. The course content has also been revised to better reflect the interdisciplinarity of the program, and the reading lists have also been updated and revised accordingly. The committee is very satisfied with these adjustments and finds the revised program portfolio considerably stronger and more crystallized. Through the response the committee has also become more aware of the multidisciplinary nature of the two mandatory courses.

The committee also appreciates the addition of the phrase "Candidates are encouraged to align their exam paper with their research projects" to the exam section in the course descriptions as a response to our advice in bullet point 3 below.

## **Conclusion**

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Review and monitor the list of electives listed. For the initial intake number of PhD candidates there are a lot of electives and they could be rationalised depending on the uptake.

- Consider whether all candidates would benefit from a diverse research methods training experience irrespective of the chosen study approach. Perhaps allow for both qualitative and quantitative research methods electives/training in the future.
- Ensure the PhD courses are flexible enough that candidates can make useful connections between the course content and their PhD project. The interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of the programme means that elective courses in particular may not be perfectly aligned with the projects of each candidate. Although not a regulatory requirement, candidates should ideally be able to tailor their exam papers to their research projects so that these papers will be useful even after the course ends.

### 3.4.5 Teaching, learning and assessment methods

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (5) The teaching, learning and assessment methods must be adapted to the programme's learning outcomes. The programme must facilitate students taking an active role in the learning process.

#### **Assessment**

A PhD programme is by its nature an individual process where the candidate must take an active role. Appendix/attachment 1a in the application provides explanations of how the different PhD courses are run, and what the teaching methods and assessment methods are. We find that it is good to have a combination of oral and written presentations in the courses, as it is important to practice both skills.

Overall, we find that the teaching, learning and assessment methods are adapted to the learning outcomes, although the presentation could be more explicit in the application. The examination form for all but one of the courses is an original paper; four courses state the paper must be written specifically for the course. An important part of a PhD education is to learn from, and be part of, the scientific discussions that are constantly taking place. This is done formally in, e.g., seminars and conferences, but also more informally in coffee rooms and corridors. The PhD programme is scattered over four different locations, which makes the latter a more difficult process but the programme seems to have a good strategy on how to overcome this type of obstacle in order to facilitate the student's learning process at the different locations and within the different disciplines. However as mentioned in 3.4.4 there are a lot of electives compared to the number of expected PhD students. We are concerned there is a risk that the students might be alone in the courses and that all electives will be self-studies. We recommend that KUC monitor the elective experience to ensure a positive taught experience in groups and not self-taught.

#### **Conclusion**

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Monitor the elective experience to ensure a positive taught experience in groups and not self-taught courses.

### 3.4.6 Links to research and academic and/or artistic development work

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (6) The programme must have relevant links to research and academic development work and/or artistic research.

#### Assessment

The application describes how the curriculum will be revised prior to effectuation of PhD courses to ensure that new research insights and technology developments are integrated. While the linkages to the industry are deemed as a clear strength that will secure the relevance of the research, the linkages to the international research community are equally important to ensure high quality research in line with the latest developments. The connection to international research is not as visible in the process of continuous development of the curriculum.

Candidates will take an active part in the established research groups at KUC and they will undertake a research project linked to ongoing research at KUC. Research topics will also be linked to the research competence of supervisors.

The committee views the link to ongoing research projects and supervisory competencies as important for securing high-quality supervision and ensuring that the PhD candidates have the best possible conditions for completing their research projects. The ambition to put together supervisory committees with capabilities in both communication and leadership is viewed by the committee as an important way of ensuring interdisciplinary approaches and understandings not only at student level but also among academic staff. Currently supervisors at other institutions are mobilised, but once a PhD programme is established at KUC, primary supervisors will be internal. The committee recommends KUC to further clarify the procedures and requirements for supervisors and how the supervisory committee is put together and the requirements for the main supervisor in terms of publications and their own research activity.

Mobilising and strengthening linkages to international networks will also be highly valuable. KUC states that it will encourage PhD student to take advantage of the existing NORSI collaboration and attend international conference participation and actively pursue international publications. In addition, KUC faculty should strive to connect their PhD students to their own international networks and train/facilitate students' development of their own global networks.

#### Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Clarify the procedures and requirements for supervisors.
- Connect PhD students to their own international research networks and support/train/facilitate students' development of own networks.

### 3.4.7 The programme's internationalisation arrangements

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (7) The programme must have internationalisation arrangements adapted to the programme's level, scope and other characteristics.

#### **Assessment**

The strategy and explanation for internationalisation is fulsome and clear. The programme is both taught and assessed in English and KUC's faculty networks are demonstrably international. This context will facilitate the students on the programme gaining an international research and study experience. The research collaborations that are outlined and exist are broad and would provide commensurate engagement for the candidates on the PhD programme. An international programme of study and research will require opportunities for both exposure and interaction with researchers from different regions, cultures and countries. The networks for KUC will provide this. This includes NORSI and UIIN as networks to facilitate international engagement. Furthermore, several of the staff members engaged on the programme as outlined are either based in other countries or institutions and work alongside the college or have previous experience in different international academic environments.

Internationalisation agreements between KUC and other institutions are supplied in attachment 2 in the application. These agreements lay the groundwork for research visits by candidates in the programme and KUC should continue building on existing international networks and continually look for ongoing opportunities for faculty and student exchange and visiting positions. PhD candidates in the programme will also be allowed to establish their own arrangements with institutions, which the international office will assist with. KUC states that the PhD candidates will receive financial support for exchanges and visits at other institutions.

We furthermore recommend that KUC consider requiring an international member on the supervisory team or in the evaluation committee (or both). This will provide international input to the candidate and grow the institution's international network.

#### **Conclusion**

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Continue building on existing international networks.
- Look for ongoing opportunities for Faculty and student exchange and visiting positions
- Consider requiring an international member on the supervisory team or in the evaluation committee (or both). This will provide international input to the candidate and grow the institution's international network.

### 3.4.8 International student exchange

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (8) Programmes that lead to a degree must have arrangements for international student exchanges. The content of the exchange programme must be academically relevant.

#### **Assessment**

As the programme is taught in English, this facilitates international student exchange and engagement. Specific international exchange agreements exist with Spain, the USA, Germany, Iceland, Austria and Slovenia. The college also has international MoU arrangements with 4 institutions and formal international agreements with 6 institutions for collaborations including the exchange of both staff and PhD students. Some of these are explicitly in the fields of communication and leadership (Table 12 in the application). Students on the programme will be encouraged to visit an international research group during their first two years. Each of these exchanges claim to have 'agreements' in place to ensure the full experience of the candidates while at the host institutions. During the site visit, discussions on the internationalisation arrangements were discussed with both the academic and administration teams. There are some clear examples of active research collaboration between academics and international institutions related to funded projects, some of which have led to co-supervision of PhD students which is a strength of the networks. The Lund University case is a positive example of a growing relationship leading from research collaboration to an adjunct position and KUC students going on to study with the partner institution.

#### **Conclusion**

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

### 3.4.9 Supervised professional training

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-2 (9) Programmes that include supervised professional training must have formal agreements between the institution and the host for the supervised professional training.

#### **Assessment**

Not relevant.

## 3.5 Demands to the academic environment

### 3.5.1 The academic environment's educational and research expertise

#### Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-3 (3) The doctoral degree programme shall be affiliated to an academic environment with a high level of expertise in education and research. The academic environment shall be able to document research results, including publication, at a high



international level, and results from collaborations with other national and international academic environments. The doctoral degree programme in Artistic Research shall be affiliated to an academic environment with a high level of expertise in education and artistic research. Artistic qualifications in subject areas described in Regulations concerning appointment and promotion to teaching and research posts, section 1-1 second paragraph shall form the basis for the appointment to teaching and research posts. The academic environment shall document comprehensive artistic research, at a high international level, and results from collaborations with other national and international academic environments.

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (5) The academic environment must be actively engaged in research and academic development work and/or artistic research, and be able to demonstrate documented results with a satisfactory quality and scope in relation to the programme's content and level.

## **Assessment**

The committee behind the application represents broad competence within the fields of communication and leadership. The different research groups associated with the programme are clearly related to the fields of communication and leadership. Relevant ongoing research projects with national partners include "Media Innovation Through the Corona Crisis" while collaboration with international partners include projects such as "Source Criticism in an Age of Mediated Disinformation" and "The organisational effects of work inclusion". Ongoing research projects on e.g. Political leadership and communication and Leadership and Communication Styles of Country Leaders in Times of Crisis, directly and explicitly appear to draw on the interdisciplinary approach. Likewise, certain courses suggested for the PhD programme, e.g. Communication and Leadership in Health Care, emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of the programme. However, the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives could have been more clearly expressed and discussed in the application, and the committee spent quite a lot of time understanding the scope of the programme.

We note that the staff within the scientific disciplines of communication, leadership and marketing (SCLM) have solid academic competence and are well represented within the programme and the courses, while the number of staff specialising in School of Health Sciences (SHS), School of Economics, Innovation and Technology (SEIT) and School of Arts, Design & Media (SADM) is limited. H-index, as an indicator of the quality of the scientific publication and citation, is on average of 19,5 for the professors (n=21) (H-index is lacking for one professor). H-index is on average of 4,7 for associate professors (n=10). The low number of staff in Health Sciences (SHS), Economics, Innovation and Technology (SEIT) and Arts, Design & Media (SADM) raise questions as to the vulnerability of a PhD programme aiming also to include and draw on these specialisations. KUC is advised to strengthen these areas at the other schools to give more possible perspectives to communication and leadership within health, sports, creative industries, and other sectors researched at KUC.

Of the 21 professors and 10 associate professors, 42 percent have experience as main supervisor for 32 completed PhD students, and co-supervision of 36 completed PhD students. All 42 percent of the members of the academic community have been, or currently are, main supervisors for PhD candidates, and 55 percent have been, or currently are, co-supervisors. Together, the academic community has supervised 68 PhD candidates

(32 as main and 36 as co-supervisors) and 709 master's students. The environment in communication and leadership is considered broad enough to support a PhD programme.

The number of scientific publications varies considerably between the involved researchers from this group. However, the environment in communication and leadership is considered broad enough to support a PhD programme. The application states that PhD students should preferably have a professor as their main supervisor. This reduces the opportunity for associate professors to increase their competence in supervision and promotion to full professors. Experience as main supervisor is often a requirement for promotion. The implications of limiting main supervision to full professors could in the future create obstacles for the competence development of associate professors.

### Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Increase the associate professors' experience with supervision of PhD students by promoting their chances of being (main) supervisors.

### 3.5.2 The academic environment's depth and breadth

#### Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-3 (4) The academic environment shall have depth and breadth in all important parts of the doctoral degree programme, so that the doctoral candidates can participate actively in different academic relations and be introduced to different perspectives.

### Assessment

The faculty of the School of Communication, Leadership and Marketing (SCLM) demonstrate depth and breadth in the areas of communication, leadership, and applications of communication research to leadership and management. These include strategic communication, organisational communication, and business relationships, as well as media innovation. Examples of faculty knowledge and achievements in their fields are presented on p. 102 of the main application. This includes their research projects, appointments, awards, international collaborations, publications, roles at peer-reviewed journals, and other forms of recognition within the academic community. A wide range of field-specific, methods-specific, and interdisciplinary research groups are also available for the PhD candidates to join. The application and our site visit both demonstrate an environment at SCLM where faculty are engaged in a variety of perspectives and tied into international networks, as well as engaged in interdisciplinary connections within the school, and to some degree multi-disciplinary activities across KUC.

The programme also demonstrates breadth in its potential for connecting different schools within KUC. Though most of the faculty members behind this application come from SCLM, the programme also incorporates faculty members from the fields of public health and administration, innovation, and creative industries. Candidates will have the opportunity to situate their projects within these areas and receive supervision from faculty in these fields.

## Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

### 3.5.3 Sufficient and stable academic environment

#### Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-3 (5) The doctoral degree programme shall be affiliated to a stable academic environment consisting of a sufficient number of staff with professor and associated professor qualifications within the breadth of the field of study. An overall assessment shall be carried out of whether the academic environment has a sufficient number of employees to cover subjects and courses and the supervision provided in the field of study. The academic environment shall consist of employees with the relevant expertise. The institution's assessments shall be documented so that NOKUT can use them in its work

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (1) The academic environment for each programme must be of a size proportionate to the number of students and the programme's characteristics, be stable over time in terms of competence and have a composition that covers the programme's topics and subjects.

## Assessment

The stability of the programme within the School of Communication, Leadership and Marketing (SCLM) is high. However, the other areas – School of Health Sciences (SHS), School of Economics, Innovation and Technology (SEIT) and School of Arts, Design & Media (SADM) – seem more vulnerable, consisting of only one or few individuals.

Currently, the number of professors with their main subject area of communication and leadership is 21 (average activity in programme 60 percent) and associate professors 10 (average activity in programme 50 percent). The academic community has 31 members who all hold first-degree competence, of which 70 percent constitutes professor-qualified members. Furthermore, 17 of the 21 professors have their main position (100 percent) at Kristiania, one has a 50 percent position and three have 20 percent positions. A total of 8 full-time-equivalents (FTEs) are assigned to the programme, of which 2.02 FTEs are teaching and supervision, 5.19 FTEs are research time and 0.79 FTEs are set aside for administrative assignments.

The balance in number of academic staff is very uneven between KUC's different subject areas. In summary, the committee considers the competence and number of staff in the core elements communication, leadership and marketing as satisfactory. In the areas of Health Sciences (SHS), Economics, Innovation and Technology (SEIT) and Arts, Design & Media (SADM) staff appear more vulnerable and should be strengthened to give more possible perspectives to communication and leadership within health, sports, creative industries, and other sectors researched at KUC. Information on possible fluctuations in staff over the coming years has not been given in the application, but we have not detected any signs of large temporal variations.

No regular accounting of scientific staff, their subject areas, activity degrees, scientific achievements (research grants, scientific publications, citations) or teaching activities seem

to be made at the institution at present. Still, such data seem relatively easy to compile, as was done for this assessment. Nevertheless, more fixed procedures would more easily facilitate possible NOKUT follow-ups.

### Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Introduce procedures to record staff employments, subject areas, activity degrees, scientific achievements (research grants, scientific publications, citations etc.) and teaching activities, in a format that can be used for NOKUT follow-ups.

### 3.5.4 Capacity and recruitment potential

#### Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Section 3-3 (6) The institution shall document that it has the capacity and recruitment potential to admit at least 15 research fellows to the doctoral degree programme during the first five years after its inception. In addition, the institution shall substantiate that it has the capacity to maintain a doctoral degree environment comprising at least 15 research fellows over time. Persons appointed under the Industrial PhD and Public Sector PhD schemes can count towards the number of research fellows pursuant to this paragraph and Section 3-8 (5). At least eight of the research fellows must have their main place of work at the institution. The institution may also accept doctoral candidates with other financing.

### Assessment

In the application KUC states that the PhD students will be recruited from 8 master's programmes at KUC (e.g. Master in Strategic Communication, Master in Leadership, Master in Innovation Management, Master in Training Science, Master in Applied Public Health) which per 2019/2020 consisted of some 159 graduated students.

Candidates will also be recruited from other national (estimated over 8000 relevant master's candidates in Norway that can potentially be recruited) and international master's programmes. Based on internal and external recruitment, KUC appears to have the capacity to recruit 15 research fellows within the first 5 years. Their own master's programmes as well as other national and international programmes should provide sufficient candidates. In addition, since a strength of KUC consists of the close relations with industry, they have the potential to target Industrial PhDs. KUC has a large number of master's programmes and our interviews with students and staff revealed quite a bit of activity and shared interest across those programmes. Interviews with master's and PhD students also suggest a quite unique learning environment with extensive support and inclusion in ongoing research activities. Hence the ability to recruit from within KUC appears promising. With the beneficial financial conditions for PhD students in Norway (compared with many other countries), external recruitment also appears feasible.

The Board has committed to securing financing of students. Additional funding can also emerge from ongoing research projects (there is already evidence of this). KUC has strong relations to industry suggesting that financing of PhD students may also be possible through Industrial PhDs.

## Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

### 3.5.5 The academic environment's educational competence

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (2) The academic environment must have relevant educational competence.

#### Assessment

Out of the 31 scholars behind the application, 24 have formal pedagogical education. The application notes they are distributed over the research groups and schools associated with the prospective programme. Academic staff also can take pedagogy courses and trainings in digital tools offered by the Department of Programme Innovation, Pedagogical Development and Learning Technology.

The scholars also have experience supervising bachelor's, master's, and doctoral students. More than a third (13 members) have experience being the main supervisor on a PhD; half (16) have been co-supervisors; and two-thirds (20) have been on a PhD committee before. In addition, the members have experience working with the 18 PhD candidates currently housed at KUC through partnerships with other universities.

The applicants write that the pedagogical approach used will be what KUC calls the "Kristiania pedagogy," which is designed to be "practice-oriented, student-led, research-based and socially relevant"; this pedagogy emphasises digital tools and skills-building. This approach currently informs teaching at the bachelor's and master's level and will also be applied to the PhD programme.

## Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

### 3.5.6 Academic leadership

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (3) The programme must have a clear academic leadership with defined responsibilities for quality assurance and the development of the study programme.

#### Assessment

The PhD programmes will be organised in a PhD School led by a dean who has overall responsibility for scientific and administrative aspects of all PhD programmes (KUC is in the process of applying for two PhD programmes). The dean reports to the rector. A head of PhD programme will lead the Doctoral Programme Committee and be responsible for the day-to-day operations. The Doctoral Programme Committee is responsible for scientific coordination (quality assurance, programme development etc).

New appointments/organisational entities that will be established to "serve" the PhD programme thereby include:

- Establishing a PhD School

- Appointing a Dean for the PhD School
- Establishing a PhD Research Committee (who appoints non-permanent scientific staff and handles admission to the program)
- Appointing a Head of PhD Programme
- Establishing a Doctoral Programme Committee

The academic leadership of the PhD programme is clearly taken seriously with the establishment of a separate (virtual) school and various structures and positions to support the programme. The PhD School has the potential to function across the four schools that will deliver academic content and supervise the PhD students. The separate PhD School is also deemed by the evaluation committee as beneficial for the students' learning environment and multidisciplinary approach.

Although the academic staff currently appears very supportive of the new PhD programme, it will be important to establish clear processes for how to deal with potential conflicts with regards to admission processes. For instance, which students are admitted if the admission becomes highly competitive? Is there a need to establish some general principles with regards to balance across KUC's schools? The site visit suggests that there may be different expectations around this, and it is typically better to establish some general and explicit rules and principles before it becomes an issue that can create tension.

### Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Develop clarity around processes of recruitment and decisions on supervision committees.

### 3.5.7 Staff with primary employment

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (4) At least 50 per cent of the academic full-time equivalents affiliated to the programme must be staff with their primary employment at the institution. Of these, academic staff with at least associate professor qualifications must be represented among those who teach the core elements of the programme. In addition, the following requirements apply to the academic environment's level of competence:

- a) For first-cycle programmes, at least 20 per cent of the members of the academic environment must have at least associate professor qualifications.
- b) For second-cycle programmes, at least 50 per cent of the members of the academic environment must have at least associate professor qualifications. Within this 50 per cent, at least 10 per cent must have professor or docent qualifications.
- c) For third-cycle programmes, the academic environment must consist of academic staff with at least associate professor qualifications. At least 50 per cent must have professor qualifications.

### Assessment

Within the KUC academic team for the programme there are a total of 31 academic members, the majority of whom hold a full-time position with the institution. Twenty-one (21) are professors and 10 are associate professors, which constitutes 70 percent professor-qualified members for the programme. In terms of employment status, 17 of the 21 professors have their main position (100 percent) at KUC, one has a 50 percent position and three have 20 percent positions. The requirements of primary employment, first-degree competence and a minimum 50 percent professor-qualified members of the academic community are therefore met. KUC is advised to encourage and support associate professors to apply for promotion to full professorial positions and provide opportunities for PhD supervision to associates.

The core elements of the programme are within leadership and communication and particularly the intersection of these two academic fields. Faculty of the School of Communication, Leadership and Marketing (SCLM) demonstrate depth and breadth in the areas of communication, leadership, and applications of communication research to leadership and management. These include strategic communication, organisational communication, and business relationships, as well as media innovation.

Discussions during the site visit clearly demonstrated that the academic staff identified in the application are also those who have been involved in developing and leading the programme. Members of the academic team listed were present in conversations and able to articulate their involvement in the programme to date and also evidence how they will be involved in both supervision and teaching of electives.

### Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Encourage and support associate professors to apply for promotion to full professorial positions.
- Provide opportunities for PhD supervision to associates (a requirement for promotion).

### 3.5.8 The academic environment's external participation

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (6) The academic environment for programmes that lead to a degree must actively participate in national and international partnerships and networks that are relevant for the programme.

### Assessment

Evaluation of the programme team's participation in the external environment is measured through engagement with research networks and research projects, participation in research grant and project awards, and publications in relevant academic outputs – i.e. peer reviewed journals as well as publishing books, monographs etc. nationally and internationally. Academic research partnerships have been exemplified in research networks (Table 11 in the application, a total of 47 international networks) and research

projects (detailed in Table 13 in the application). The programme team have also demonstrated an increasing performance in publication quality and quantify over the past 5 years, with articles in *Media, Culture & Society*, *Public Management Review*, and other top international journals. The number of publications has seen an increase from 54 outputs in 2015 to a peak in 2018 of 93 and a maintenance of increased performance in the last recorded round of 2019 with 88 outputs. KUC is encouraged to provide opportunities for less experienced associates and PhD candidates to co-author and publish with experienced members of the team.

Seven members of the academic team have served or are editors in chief of international peer reviewed journals.

In addition to traditional academic knowledge exchange, the team members are active in dissemination within the private and public sector, including presentations to business leaders and government agencies, and op-eds in newspapers. KUC is encouraged to continue sharing the dissemination activities of the group.

### Conclusion

Yes, the requirements are fulfilled.

The institution is advised to:

- Continue sharing the dissemination activities of the group.
- Provide opportunities for less experienced associates and PhD candidates to co-author and publish with experienced members of the team.

### 3.5.9 Supervision of professional training

#### Academic Supervision Regulations

Section 2-3 (7) For programmes involving mandatory supervised professional training, the members of the academic environment must have relevant and updated knowledge from the field of the professional training. The institution must ensure that professional training supervisors have relevant competence and experience in the field of the professional training.

### Assessment

Not relevant.

## 4 Conclusion

Based on the written application with attached documentation and the institutions commentary with attachments the expert committee concludes the following:

**The committee recommends accreditation of the PhD in communication and leadership at Kristiania University College.**



In the report the committee has provided advice for the further development of this study program.

## 5 Documentation

20/09913-1 Høyskolen Kristiania - Søknad om akkreditering av ph.d.-studiet Ph.d. i kommunikasjon og ledelse

20/09913-12 Supplering til søknad om PhD i kommunikasjon og ledelse, samt tentativt program for institusjonsbesøket

20/09913-15 Tilsvaer på utkast til sakkyndig rapport - Høyskolen Kristiania - Søknad om akkreditering av ph.d.-studiet Ph.d. i kommunikasjon og ledelse

20/09913-17 Vedrørende tilsvaer på utkast til sakkyndig rapport

# Appendix

## 1. The learning outcome of the programme

### Knowledge

The candidate...

- is in the forefront of the research-based knowledge within communication and leadership needed to understand, explain and address contemporary societal and organisational phenomena.
- can evaluate the expediency and application of different methods, quantitative or qualitative, in communication and leadership research.
- can contribute to the development of new knowledge, theories, methods, interpretations and forms of documentation in communication and leadership in a way that is relevant to understand, explain and address contemporary societal and organisational phenomena.

### Skills

The candidate...

- can formulate problems, plan and carry out research on contemporary societal and organisational phenomena through the lens of communication and leadership.
- can carry out interdisciplinary communication and leadership research of a high international standard.
- can handle academically complex issues related to communication and leadership and challenge established knowledge and practice so as to address contemporary societal and organisational phenomena using an interdisciplinary approach.

### General competence

The candidate...

- can identify new relevant ethical issues pertaining to the research and practice of communication and leadership and carry out his/her research with scholarly integrity.
- can manage complex assignments and projects that require the mobilisation and integration of knowledge within communication, leadership and related disciplines.
- can communicate his/her research to an academic audience through scientific publications and conference presentations and disseminate it to a broader audience such as policy makers and organisational managers.
- can participate in debates in the disciplines of communication and leadership in international forums that discuss how to understand, explain and address contemporary societal and organisational phenomena.
- can assess the need for, initiate and practice innovation within communication and leadership so as to augment existing knowledge and methods in a way that helps policy makers and organisations address contemporary societal and organisational phenomena.

## **2. The accreditation process**

NOKUT makes an administrative assessment to ensure that the application and documentation is suitable for external expert review. For applications that have been approved administratively, NOKUT appoints external experts for the evaluation of the application. The external experts have declared that they are legally competent to perform an independent evaluation, and carry out their assignment in accordance with the mandate for expert assessment passed by NOKUT's board, and in accordance with the requirements for educational quality as determined by the Academic Supervision Regulations and Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The institution is given the opportunity to comment on the committee's composition.

NOKUT is responsible for the training and guidance of the experts during the entire process. The expert assessment includes a visit, online or at the institution, where the following groups are interviewed: the management of the university college, master's students, PhD candidates, academic management, the discipline community, administrative management and possibly employers. In addition, the committee inspects the university college's infrastructure. Based on both the written documentation and information from the interviews, the expert committee writes their assessment. The expert committee conclude either with a yes or no, as to whether the quality of the educational provision complies with the requirements the Academic Supervision Regulations and Regulations on Quality Assurance in Higher Education. NOKUT also requests that the expert committee advise on further improvements of the programme. All criteria must be satisfactorily met before NOKUT accredits a programme.

If the expert committee recommends accreditation of the programme, the report is sent to the applicant institution, which is then given one week to comment on factual errors. If the committee do not recommend accreditation of the programme, the applicant institution is given three weeks to comment and make smaller adjustments to the programme. The committee receives the institutions comments and submits a revised assessment. The Board of NOKUT then reaches a final decision about accreditation.

### 3. The programme for the site visit

Institution: Kristiania University College

Application: PhD in Communication and Leadership

Date: 13-14 September

<b>DAY 1:</b>			
<b>Duration</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Name of participants (maximum 6 participants per meeting)</b>
45 min	09:15-10:00	<i>Preliminary meeting for the committee</i>	
45 min	10:00-10:45	Meeting with <b>the leadership</b> at the institution (i.e. Rector, Director, Dean, Head of Studies, R&D Coordinator, Student Union, representative from the board)	
		<i>Break</i>	
45 min	11:00-11:45	Meeting with <b>academic staff</b> behind the application	
		<i>Break</i>	
45 min	12:00-12:45	Meeting with <b>PhD students</b> (Founded by HK, main supervisor and most relevant project for the PhD)	
45 min	12:45-13:30	<i>Lunch (for the committee only)</i>	
45 min	13:30-14:15	Meeting with <b>academic leadership</b> , representing the four Schools (Faculty, Department, Section)	
		<i>Break</i>	
45 min	14:30-15:15	Meeting with <b>master's students</b> (from relevant master's programmes recruiting for the PhD, representing the four schools)	
		<i>Break</i>	
45 min	15:30-16:15	Meeting with <b>academic staff</b> , representing different research groups and Schools	
		<i>Break</i>	
45 min	16:30-17:15	Meeting with <b>possible employers</b>	
	17:15-18:00	<i>Committee meeting</i>	

<b>DAY 2:</b>			
<b>Duration</b>	<b>Time</b>		
45 min	09:00-09:45	<b>Infrastructure</b>	
		<i>Break</i>	
45 min	10:00-10:45	Meeting with <b>academic staff</b> , representing different research groups and schools	
		<i>Break</i>	
45 min	11:00-11:45	Meeting with <b>administrative staff</b> (i.e. responsible contact person for PhD-students, student admission, library, internationalisation, ICT-support)	
30 min	11:45-12:15	<i>Lunch (for the committee only)</i>	
45 min	12:15-13:00	<b>Committee meeting</b>	
		<i>Break</i>	
60 min	13:15-14:15	Final meeting with <b>the leadership</b> (the same as in day 1)	•
	14:15-	<i>Committee meeting and departure</i>	

#### **4. Presentation of the expert committee**

*The competencies of the expert committee assessing the PhD programme is amended in the Academic Supervision Regulations Section 5-6*

##### **Professor Inger G. Stensaker, NHH Norwegian School of Economics**

Stensaker is a professor of strategic change at the Department of Strategy and Management at NHH Norwegian School of Economics. Her research interests include among others strategic and organisational change processes, strategy implementation, change management and qualitative process studies. She has been the project leader for several large collaborative and cross-disciplinary research projects, and she is now leading the project *RaCE: Radical Technology-driven Change in Established Firms* (2019-2023).

Since 2012 she has been a distinguished visiting scholar at Benedictine University in Chicago with biannual intensive teaching sessions. Stensaker has a broad experience in teaching and supervision at all levels, including the supervision of several PhD students. In 2018 she was awarded for her outstanding contribution to the field of values-driven leadership by the students in the Executive PhD Program at the Center for Values-Driven Leadership, Benedictine University of Chicago.

##### **Professor Ralph Tench, Leeds University Business School, United Kingdom**

Professor Ralph Tench is Director of Research for Leeds Business School, Leeds Beckett University in the UK, and Past President of the European Public Relations Research and Education Association (EUPRERA). Professor Tench's research involves national and international funded projects from the private sector, the EU, Public Health England, the NHS and research councils. He has written and edited 26 books; published over 40 academic journal papers; presented worldwide more than 60 peer reviewed papers. His books include the market leading textbook for the strategic communication subject internationally, *Exploring Public Relations*, in its 14th year and fifth edition (2021) and recently *Communication Excellence – How to Develop, Manage and Lead Exceptional Communications*, with colleagues from the longitudinal, annual European Communication Monitor project (14 years, [www.communicationmonitor.eu](http://www.communicationmonitor.eu)). Tench's research interests and activities are in the broad field of organisational communication with specific focus on professional and strategic communication as well as in the social and cultural impact communication has on large societal issues such as health, social and public policy and discrimination.

Professor Ralph Tench's research focuses on two communications strands, firstly for social impact and secondly in organisational strategy, behaviour and performance. His work involves national and international funded projects including working with either large organisations and business, such as the annual European Communication Monitor, the largest and longest running worldwide survey in strategic communication and now in its 15th year and with expanded projects in the Global Communication Monitor Series in North America, Latin America and the Asia Pacific regions. His research and engagement includes working with business leaders, professional bodies and representative associations as well

as small to medium sized enterprises. For example he recently led a €600K EU project on climate change using deliberative engagement across 7 countries. He also completed a similarsized competency project for the communications sector across Europe, again funded by the EU, and supports a new EU funded SME e-learning project (SME-ELEARN). He was part of a research team into Whole Systems Obesity funded by Public Health England. He is a current consultant to the EU working the DG for Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, and has been a specialist reviewer and evaluator for the Commission for research funds in 2017, 2019 and 2020. Professor Tench is President (2017-2020) of the European Public Relations Research and Education Association (EUPRERA) where he has been a Board Director (2013-2017) and Head of Scientific Committee (2009-2014).

#### **Professor Ewa Wikström, University of Gothenburg**

Ewa Wikström is a professor in Organisation and Management at the School of Business, Economics and Law at the University of Gothenburg. Between 2012-2015 she held a professorship in public health management at the Nordic School of Public Health. Her main research areas include management, organisation studies, leadership, communication, and collaboration. She has coordinated several research projects and is currently involved in three projects: *A co-created artistic design's contribution to social engagement and a sustainable living environment (2015-2021)*, *AgeCap, Centre for Ageing and Health, a multi-disciplinary research project on ageing and capability (2013-2021)* and *Work Environment, health promotion, prevention and organisational condition; StratSam: Strategic collaboration – evaluation and development of new process models in work environment practices in the public sector, AFA, and Institute of Stress Medicine, VGR (2013-2021)*. In the period between 2018-2020 she was the vice dean of education at the school of Business, Economics and Law. Wikström has a broad experience in teaching in the fields of organisation studies, leadership, and communication, and she has supervised more than 10 Ph.D. students.

#### **Doctoral research fellow Jessica Yarin Robinson, University of Oslo**

Jessica Yarin Robinson is a doctoral research fellow at the Institute for Media and Communication at the University of Oslo, where she studies transnational political communication on social media. Using a combination qualitative approaches and digital methods, her research maps cross-border online publics and explores the spread of political information and identities via the global web. Jessica holds a Master's of Philosophy in Nordic Media and a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism. She previously worked as a journalist for public service broadcasting in the United States.





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