

Principles for NOKUT evaluations



NOKUT – the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – is a government administrative body under the Ministry of Education and Research.



NOKUT has its own board and performs its tasks with professional autonomy, as defined in the Act Relating to Universities and University Colleges. In addition, we perform administrative tasks delegated by the Ministry of Education and Research



The purpose of NOKUT's activities is to supervise quality in higher education and tertiary vocational education, as well as to promote quality enhancement, to ensure a high international level in the institutions' educational programmes.



NOKUT's ambition is to ensure and contribute to the enhancement of quality in Norwegian education by being a future-oriented and internationally leading quality assurance body for higher education and tertiary vocational education.



Every year several experts are involved in quality assurance, evaluation, and projects on behalf of NOKUT.

For more information about our work, please go to our website: nokut.no.



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1 What is a NOKUT evaluation

Evaluations are part of NOKUT's work to assure and enhance quality in education. NOKUT conducts national, comparative evaluations of selected groups of study programmes. These will often be study programmes within a particular academic subject, but NOKUT may also conduct thematic evaluations of quality across subject areas.

The Act relating to universities and university colleges § 16-3 states that the Ministry of Education and Research can instruct NOKUT to conduct evaluations to assess the quality of higher education according to § 16-2 letter d, which specifies that NOKUT has professional autonomy in this task. NOKUT's national evaluations fall under the [national framework for the evaluation of Norwegian research and higher education](#) and should therefore contribute to quality work at the institutions, knowledge-based policy development, a solid knowledge base for study applicants and partners, confidence in higher education in the population, and transparency in the use of public funds.

The purposes of NOKUT's evaluations are as follows:

- **The evaluations should assess the quality of higher education.** The comparative aspect of the evaluations provide higher education institutions with the opportunity to compare their own study programmes with those of other institutions.
- **The evaluations should generate knowledge about quality in higher education.** The evaluations should therefore provide important information to management, teachers, administrative staff and students at higher education institutions, prospective applicants, graduates, external partners, professional bodies, the Ministry of Education and Research, NOKUT and other stakeholders. In this way, the evaluations also contribute to public trust in the quality of Norwegian higher education.
- **The evaluations should support the enhancement of quality in higher education** by identifying good practice and challenges, and give recommendations for follow-up action. The evaluations adopt an enhancement-oriented approach, and should facilitate the exchange of experiences.

2 What are the principles underlying NOKUT evaluations?

NOKUT evaluations are based on principles laid down in the Public Administration Act and the Act relating to universities and university colleges. In addition, it is informed by [the national framework for the evaluation of Norwegian research and higher education](#), the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#), internationally recognized quality standards for evaluations, such as the [DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation](#) and [Joint Committee on Standards for Educational](#)

[Evaluation \(JCSEE\)](#), as well as guidelines for the evaluation of public sector operations from the Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management (DFØ).

The following principles are particularly relevant to the conduct of NOKUT evaluations:

- 1. Evaluations must be independent.**
 - a. The evaluation processes and results are professionally independent, cf. Act relating to universities and university colleges § 16-2 letter d.
 - b. NOKUT shall ensure that those who carry out the evaluation are independent and impartial.

- 2. Evaluations must follow strict quality requirements.**
 - a. Evaluations shall be based on reliable and relevant data sources.
 - b. Evaluations shall use designs and methods that are fit for purpose.
 - c. Evaluations shall be performed by persons with relevant competence.
 - d. Those who perform evaluations must exercise caution in conclusions about causation.
 - e. Evaluations must be efficient in terms of cost and time.
 - f. NOKUT shall ensure the quality of its external evaluations.

- 3. Evaluation processes shall be transparent and predictable**
 - a. Institutions must be notified of future evaluations as early as possible.
 - b. NOKUT shall set appropriate deadlines for all phases of the evaluation process.
 - c. Institutions must be informed about why and how the evaluation is carried out, including which data sources and criteria are used for the evaluation and what they are expected to contribute to the evaluation process.
 - d. NOKUT shall facilitate the participation and involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process.
 - e. Institutions shall be given the opportunity to raise issues of concern about the evaluation process with NOKUT.
 - f. Institutions shall be given the opportunity to review the evaluation report for errors of facts, misprints and misrepresentations in the draft report. NOKUT will then correct any errors before the report is published.
 - g. Institutions shall be given the opportunity to submit a position statement on the evaluation report. The statements thus received are presented to the board of NOKUT and published together with the evaluation report.
 - h. Institutions shall be given the right to appeal the evaluation report on the basis of errors related to NOKUT's principles for evaluation. NOKUT shall inform institutions about the possibility and procedure for filing an appeal.

- 4. For evaluations carried out by an expert committee, NOKUT shall ensure that the committee has an appropriate composition.**
 - a. The expert committee shall have competence in, and experience from, the subject areas and/or thematic areas that are relevant to the evaluation.
 - b. For evaluations of educational quality, at least one of the members of the committee shall be a student.

- c. For evaluations of educational quality, at least one of the members of the committee shall represent the perspective of employers/professional practitioners or a community perspective.
- c. The expert committee shall, as far as possible, have a balanced composition in terms of gender, geography, and institutional affiliation.
- d. Institutions shall be given the opportunity to comment and provide input on the composition of the committee.
- e. Institutions shall be given the opportunity to comment on the selected experts before they are appointed.

5. Evaluation results shall be publicly available

- b. All evaluations carried out by NOKUT are public and will be published on the NOKUT website. NOKUT shall contribute to the dissemination of evaluation results, cf. Act relating to universities and university colleges § 16-3.



DRAMMENSVEIEN 288 | POSTBOKS 578,1327 LYSAKER | T: 21 02 18 00 | [NOKUT.NO](https://www.nokut.no)