



HUMANITIES STRATEGY 2018–2022

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

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INTRODUCTION

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN HUMANITIES STRATEGY 2018–2022	3
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MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY	7
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PRIORITIES

QUALITY IN THE HUMANITIES.....	10
SOCIETAL RELEVANCE	12
WORKING LIFE.....	14
SCHOOLS	16
LANGUAGES	18

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN HUMANITIES STRATEGY 2018–2022

Like all classic European research universities, the University of Bergen (UiB) is characterised by a large number of humanities disciplines. UiB is home to Norway's second largest research environment within the humanities, in terms of both size and breadth. As well as being independent disciplines, humanities are also a starting point for ethical, historical and critical reflections for other subjects and general fields of knowledge. A clear strategic enhancement of the humanities is vital for UiB as a whole to raise its standing as an international research institution.

The government's white paper entitled *The Humanities in Norway* (Report no. 25 to the Storting)

emphasises the critical importance of the humanities as stewards of our history and culture, and in dealing with the complex societal challenges. In the years to come, competence in humanities will increasingly be included in Research Council of Norway (NFR) research programmes and in the new EU research framework programme, Horizon Europe.

This strategy will help to profile, develop UiB's qualities in the humanities, and contribute to position the University strategically in national and international competition arenas.





THE HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE

The humanities contribute to historical understanding and to underpin critical analysis, interpretation competence and linguistic awareness as tools and expressions. The humanities provide specific skills that are of great significance to public

debate, but also have intrinsic value as experience and insight. The humanities entail reflections on the fundamental issues of existence, experience, meaning and values, and practises stewardship of historical memory and cultural awareness.

THE HUMANITIES AT UiB

The Faculty of Humanities was established in 1948, when UiB received its formal charter. At that time, there was already a long tradition of humanities research at UiB. Archaeological, folklore and linguistic research under the auspices of Bergen Museum dates back to the first half of the 19th century.

The disciplines that belong to/hosted by the Faculty of Humanities (HF) are a hub for humanistic knowledge and skills at UiB, but humanities-based perspectives also have an important role to play at other faculties such as Law (Juss), Social Science (SV) and Fine Art, Music and Design (KMD). By virtue of its collections and research, the University Museum has an important responsibility in terms of cultural stewardship. The University Library's collections, infrastructure and role as a meeting place for research and education are also an important arena for the humanities at UiB.

In the social remit of the humanities, research is closely linked to the communication of knowledge through textbooks, in major popular science

works, in newspaper articles, lectures and through expert commentators. The establishment of a multidisciplinary Medieval Research Cluster is one of several tools being applied to strengthen UiB humanities' interactions with the society. Efforts to further develop and digitalise the dictionaries and management of the language collections has reinforced UiB's social role. The opening of the University Museum's old main building, with areas for moving exhibitions and an arena for research communication, along with the plan to construct a landmark building for the humanities at Sydneshaugen, will be important in helping to consolidate Bergen and UiB as a centre for humanities in Norway.

Digitalisation paves the way for major opportunities in research, education, innovation and communication. UiB is a leader in digitalisation among Norwegian universities and has important digitalisation projects under way at the University Museum, the University Library and in many humanities subjects across all faculties.

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

UiB aims to deliver high-quality knowledge and teaching, and develop research and a range of courses that meet future needs and contribute to UiB's priority areas.

FOR UiB TO REALISE THESE AMBITIONS, THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY ARE:

- to further a high international level of quality in humanities research and education, and enhance UiB's national position by building solid, stable humanities environments
- to strengthen and facilitate cross-faculty humanities research
- to strengthen the impact of UiB and humanities subjects in Research Council of Norway and EU research programmes
- to promote an understanding of how important the humanities are for the ability to resolve societal challenges and emphasize/make clear the significance of the humanities in society and working life
- to increase the focus on teacher training and strengthen dialogue with schools
- to enhance the stewardship and development of the Norwegian language and foreign languages
- to develop and coordinate UiB's environments in digital humanities and strengthen UiB's national position in this area

The strategy implements the emphasis on five priority areas in the white paper *The Humanities in Norway*: high academic quality in the disciplines of the humanities, social relevance, working life, schools and languages. As a comprehensive university with one of Norway's largest, most prominent humanities communities, UiB has an

ambition to be a national leader in all five areas. As part of the strategy, each of the areas will be followed up, with a more in-depth description outlining UiB's role, challenges and objectives in the field. Separate points of action will supplement the strategy's priority areas.

PRIORITIES



QUALITY IN THE HUMANITIES

UiB must build on its strong research environments in history, philosophy, religion, languages, literature and aesthetics. Academic range and diversity are vital to the quality of the humanities. This lays/constitute a broad foundation for UiB's contribution to international research projects, to interdisciplinary, challenge-driven research, and to the rich variety of perspectives in the society as such. Long-term, stable frameworks for research through the institutions' permanent academic positions are a prerequisite for high research quality and a good range of teaching. Quality within the disciplines can be strengthened by international publications, participation in major research collaborations – within both the discipline and interdisciplinary – and active involvement in a variety of national and international research networks.

The unique characteristics of humanities research must be taken into account while enhancing

systematically the specific qualities in the field. Much of the research in humanities subjects is individual. UiB has to safeguard the individual researcher and at the same time develop a clearer international strategy for the humanities, support successful research teams, assist in the sharing of best practices and career building for researchers, strengthen research management and carry out active quality-promoting efforts. Ambitious, strategic recruitment of academic staff is crucial. In developing the range of study programmes and subjects, the humanities communities must strengthen their academic quality, increase external fundings, and focus on cooperation and interdisciplinary collaboration to broaden the scope of actions for the different disciplines in the humanities.

Several European and American universities have established centres to enhance the interdisciplinary approach and research into fundamental



issues within the humanities and to establish dialogue across faculties and subjects. UiB should look into the potential for a centre of innovative humanities research, dissemination and communication for research groups, researchers and projects.

Digital humanities represent a particular source of potential at UiB. Different humanities environments at UiB have been pioneers in the digitisation

of records and databases, the development of digital datasets and analytical methods, and in cultural research perspectives on the digital technology shift. There is great academic potential in coordinating work between relevant environments at UiB with expertise in digital infrastructure so as to boost the digital humanities. The University Museum's and the University Library's collections and infrastructure represent another potential for development.

OBJECTIVE 1: HIGH INTERNATIONAL QUALITY AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION/STUDY PROGRAMS, PHD-EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
Define and clarify the connections between academic breadth and academic quality.	HF	2019
Identify and give priority to disciplines with particularly promising academic preconditions.	HF	2019
Establish a publication strategy for the humanities to increase the quality of publication.	HF	2019
Define and develop HF's PhD-programmes.	HF	2018–22
Stimulate solid research groups in and across faculties.	HF, SV, Juss, UM, KMD, FA	2019–20
Establish a project in order to strengthen and coordinate strategic application work, with a view to increasing funding from NFR and EU research programmes.	HF, SV, Juss, UM, KMD, FA	2019
Investigate the potential to establish an interdisciplinary humanities centre.	The University Leadership, HF	2018–22
Establish a digital humanities programme to further develop UiB as a leader in digital humanities: communication and educational practice, generic skills, method development, digital infrastructure, and research into the digital technology shift.	HF, SV, UB, UM, IT	2019
Plan a landmark building for the humanities in Dokkeveien/Sydenshaugen that will strengthen interaction between the various humanities communities, students, administrative resources and the society, while also being a venue for outstanding humanities research, learning, language training, innovation and communication.	The University Leadership, HF, EIA	2018–22

OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE RECRUITMENT TO HUMANITIES STUDIES AND RESEARCH

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
Establish a dedicated student recruitment programme for the humanities.	HF, SA	2019
Develop education programmes or research paths for particularly promising and motivated students.	HF	2020

SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

To enhance the social relevance of the humanities, this strategy has defined two key objectives. One is to strengthen input and perspectives from the humanities in UiB's priority areas – marine, climate and energy change, and global societal challenges. The second objective regarding social relevance is to, within the disciplines in the humanities at UiB, to strengthen and further develop

the capacity of safeguarding and communicating our cultural heritage in a society characterised by fast-paced change and a great need for adaptation. The UN has recognised stewardship and active development of cultural heritage as a pivotal aspect of the sustainability goals. This has been and remains an important task for humanities research and education.



**OBJECTIVE 1: THE HUMANITIES SHALL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN
SETTING THE AGENDA FOR RESEARCH ON MAJOR SOCIETAL CHALLENGES**

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
Increase input from the humanities in UiB's strategic priority areas by stimulating the development of competitive multidisciplinary projects and applications with a clear humanistic perspective in major NFR and EU programmes.	HF, the faculties, UM, FA	2018–22
Strengthen humanistic perspectives in the efforts to resolve major societal challenges by contributing to the novel design of the EU and NFR programmes and by participating in the most important meeting places for research policy.	HF, SV, Juss, FA	2018–22
Define the humanities perspectives in UiB's innovation activities.	HF	2019

**OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE AND HIGHLIGHT THE HUMANITIES'
STEWARDSHIP OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL MONUMENTS**

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
Make use of the University Museum and University Library as a central arena for communication related to the humanities and contribute to develop the "Arena for research communication" project at the University Museum (UM).	UM, UB, HF, SV, Juss; KMD	2018–22
Ensure good stewardship of archives, collections and other shared resources of importance to the public and the disciplines in the humanities, so that these are made available for research, teaching, communication and innovation.	UB, UM, HF, the University Leadership	2018–22
Actively use the Medieval Research Cluster to seek external partnerships locally, nationally and internationally. Showcase UiB's medieval expertise, collections and exhibitions.	HF, Juss UM, UB, KMD, the University Leadership, external	2018–22

WORKING LIFE

Highlighting and clarifying humanistic education and programmes and their relevance to working life will increase the interest for the humanities in society. At the same time, disciplines from the humanities should be more integrated alongside other disciplines in the academic degrees. More

interdisciplinary academic degrees can open up the humanities perspective to other groups. The humanities must respond to the needs of lifelong learning and continue to develop the range of further and continued education.



OBJECTIVE 1: HIGHLIGHT THE RELEVANCE OF THE HUMANITIES TO WORKING LIFE

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
A special focus on strengthening the information to future students on the career opportunities provided by humanities programmes.	SA, HF, KA	2019

OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOP COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH WORKING LIFE

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
Establish a project that takes account of various measures specific to the humanities: career-guidance, the alumni network, mentoring and arrange traineeships during the study period, etc.	SA, KA, HF	2019
Develop further and continued education across the range of humanities.	SA, HF, UM	2019–22
Actively use the opportunity for industrial PhD and public sector PhD schemes.	HF, Juss, SV, KMD	2018–22

SCHOOLS

The school system is the humanities' most important interface with society. Teachers and students are invited to the University and the museum, schools are a communication arena for the various disciplines and the future workplace for many humanities students.

UiB will further develop the humanities' close relationship with schools by enhancing school outreach, extending university-school collaboration, facilitating more interaction with partner schools, and focusing on teacher education. It is an ambition to improve the interaction between disciplines, didactics, pedagogy, and the school system. The museum is an asset that can be exploited more systematically in the collaboration with schools.

UiB's teacher education has tremendous/important academic potential, thanks to broad professional competence and a unique proximity between disciplines and teaching/didactics environments. UiB is alone in western Norway in offering pivotal school subjects such as French, German and Spanish. UiB has challenges with regard to the organisation of the teacher training/education. It is necessary to further develop this education to reduce the dropout rate and increase the quality of study.

It is a goal to increase the volume of candidates for both 5LU and PPU. A prerequisite for successfully combining a volume increase with quality enhancement is sufficient staffing and a professional academic collaboration between the environments involved. It is also important that relevant disciplines participate in the formulation of school policy, curriculums and teaching aids nationally.



OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SCHOOL SECTOR

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
Strengthen institutional academic-political involvement in the school sector by seeking participation in academic-political processes related to curriculum development and teacher education.	HF, MN, SV, Psych., the University Leadership	2018–22
Further develop the partner school collaboration and the University–school collaboration within the humanities.	HF, MN, SV, Psych., SA	2018–22

OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN TEACHER TRAINING

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
Develop shared arenas where the various disciplines, didactics, pedagogics and school teachers can interact with students and pupils on teaching and research in line with the intentions of <i>Teacher Education 2025</i> .	HF, MN, SV, Psych.	2018–22
Develop teacher education through clear leadership, predictable study programmes, new subjects, increased candidate volume, improved traineeship cooperation with schools, and academic-social initiatives for teaching students	HF, MN, SV, Psych., the University Management	2018–22

OBJECTIVE 3: ENHANCE THE RANGE OF FURTHER AND CONTINUED EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
A special commitment to implement new further and continued education offerings for teachers associated with state programmes such as “Competence for quality”, or as stand-alone subject courses with opportunities for digital teaching solutions.	HF, MN, SV, Psych., UB, SA, DigUiB	2018–22

LANGUAGES

Language is the epicentre of all knowledge generation. Norwegian language variants have a particular place in the humanities in Norway. In a globalised and digitalised world, the importance of knowledge of foreign languages is fundamental. A small country like Norway, with an open economy and widespread international involvement, needs good, effective tools for communication and intercultural interaction with others. The language and literary disciplines at UiB have a special responsibility to safeguard and develop Norwegian language variants and foreign languages, both in research and teaching. Nordic languages and English have a firm position at UiB. UiB also offers study programmes in Arabic, French,

Greek, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Latin, Russian, Spanish and Latin American Studies, and German.

UiB's academic communities should be stable, robust and have good predictability. The foreign language subjects are broad in scope, they teach and research in literature, linguistics, culture and foreign language education.

UiB will work closely with the school-, work- and business spheres in spreading awareness of the relevance of language studies. UiB is the only academic institution in western Norway that offers degrees in German, French and Spanish, and will take particular responsibility for stewardship of



these disciplines in the region. Several foreign language disciplines are challenged by varying student recruitment, and in recent years downsizing has hit many of them.

UiB wants to play a pivotal role in the stewardship of Norwegian and further develop language skills within a wide range of foreign languages. The language collections, which were transferred to UiB

from the University of Oslo in 2016, are a significant scientific resource consisting of older physical and digital material. The collections are the foundation for the Norwegian dictionaries and are used in onomastics and norming of place names. Ensuring sound stewardship of these resources will pave the way for research-based development of the Norwegian language.

GOAL 1: RAISE THE QUALITY OF LANGUAGE SUBJECTS

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
Assess the breadth/variety (?) and ensure sound, predictable frameworks for UiB's foreign language disciplines.	HF, the University Leadership	2019
Improve the quality of language education by increasing the proportion of students who spend a year abroad.	HF	2018–22
Invest in establishing a centre of excellence related to language subjects.	HF	2020

GOAL 2: UIB'S LANGUAGE DISCIPLINES SHALL HAVE A LEADING ROLE IN NATIONAL LANGUAGE STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

MAIN ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIME FRAME
Accentuate the language disciplines special importance to UiB's international profile.	The University Leadership, HF	2018–22
Highlight and further develop UiB's role in fostering degree programmes in foreign languages in western Norway.	HF, the University Leadership	2018–22
Use the language collections and work on the dictionaries to develop projects and initiatives in the Norwegian language and UiB's role in national language stewardship and development.	HF, UB, the University Leadership	2018–22
Consider to develop additional language learning for employees, students and others.	HF	2020
A particular emphasis on student recruitment to foreign languages and highlighting working life relevance	HF, SA, KA	2019



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