



THE QUALITY SYSTEM FOR EDUCATION



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

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1. BACKGROUND

The Quality System for Education is part of UiB's main internal control system, and includes bachelor's and master's programmes, one-year programmes and continuing and further education. Processes and measures included in the quality system will contribute to the university's systematic work in maintaining, revising and further developing the provision of education and quality of the programmes.

UiB has a separate specialised quality system for PhD education, which follows the same general principles of evaluation and reporting, and which is subject to the same requirements stipulated in the Academic Supervision Regulations, the Regulations concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education, and the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges. A full description of the quality system for PhD education at UiB can be found here: <https://www.uib.no/foransatte/95455/kvalitetssystem-phd-utdanningen-ved-uib>

1.1 STRATEGIC AMBITIONS FOR WORKING WITH QUALITY IN EDUCATION

UiB's systematic work with quality in education is rooted in the university's strategy for 2023 - 2030, *Knowledge that shapes society*. The strategy provides direction for UiB's work with developing study programmes and the quality of education.

As a public institution, UiB contributes to sustainable and democratic development, and is an attractive and inclusive place of study and work. The cornerstone of quality in education is that teaching and learning are research-based and closely linked to knowledge development. UiB has a national responsibility to offer educational programmes that span a wide range of academic disciplines. Our study programmes promote independence, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. UiB educates candidates who can shape tomorrow's society, working life and the business sector with perspectives from different subject areas. We provide students with an academic foundation that lasts throughout their lives and that contributes to creating competent and reflective citizens.

The quality system ensures that UiB manages all its educational programmes in accordance to UiB's strategic ambitions, regulatory requirements and national requirements. At UiB, the following principles are particularly important in the understanding of quality in education:

- Teaching focuses on student learning
- The content, methods and form of education are research-based
- Students' actual learning outcomes align with learning objectives and are reflected in final assessments
- Education is relevant in terms of student and societal needs and forms a good foundation for lifelong learning
- Students are invited to influence the planning, implementation and revision of the educational programmes
- Study programmes and courses are continuously evaluated and further developed
- Educators have subject-specific and educational expertise and contribute to collegial collaboration in order to enhance the quality of the educational programmes
- Students are involved in stimulating learning environments with appropriate physical and digital learning arenas.

1.2 QUALITY SYSTEM FOR BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S PROGRAMMES, ONE-YEAR PROGRAMMES, AND CONTINUING AND FURTHER EDUCATION

The quality work can be described as a continuous process, where the elements of planning, execution, evaluation, and further development are repeated in all activities at all levels. Deficiencies in quality are registered and met with systematic solutions for follow-up and documentation of measures taken. Experiences from successful quality work are shared and used for further development. Students are involved in all phases of quality in education work.

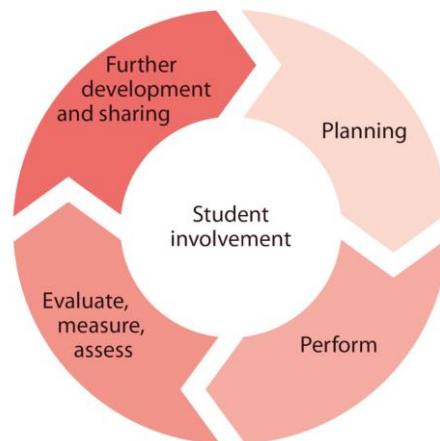


Figure 1: Systematic quality in education work at UiB

The Quality System for Education ensures that UiB comply with the systematic quality work requirements stated in chapters 2 and 4 of the Academic Supervision Regulations, in Section 2-1 (2) and Section 3-1 to Section 3-3 of the Regulations concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education, and in Section 3-5 and Section 10-1 (3) of the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges. Including requirements that:

- Systems are in place to systematically check that all educational programmes, both new and established, meet the requirements stipulated in Sections 3-1 and 3-2 of the Regulations concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education, and Chapter 2 of the Academic Supervision Regulations.
- The knowledge gained from the quality work is used to further develop the quality of the study programmes in accordance with Section 2-1 (1) of the Regulations concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education.

The quality work is rooted in strategies and management at UiB and contributes to the promotion of a quality culture for all employees and students; cf. Sections 4-1(1) and (2) of the Academic Supervision Regulations. Development and assurance of quality work is to be documented.

2. DEVELOPMENT AND CONTROL OF QUALITY IN EDUCATION

At UiB, the systematic work on quality in education runs along two lines that influence each other: Development and control. Together with the support systems referred to in Section 2.3, the processes described in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 ensure that the study programmes and the quality in education continuously develop and meet the requirements for accredited study programmes.

2.1 QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

Quality development requires regular interaction and dialogue between students, teachers, academic communities, administration and collaborative partners at all levels: course, programme of study, department, faculty and institution. Key to this work is personal experiences, knowledge and

reflections from educators and course coordinators. Quality development is based on continuous testing, evaluation and revision of academic content, teaching and assessment methods. The development work focus on student learning, and provide meaningful alignment between learning objectives, learning activities and assessment in course and study programmes. Collegial arenas for interaction and sharing experiences are important for building educational expertise, ensuring relevance and coherence through the study programmes.

Faculties have Excellent Teaching Practitioner schemes in place that recognise educators who document systematic quality work focused on student learning, development of teaching practices, research-based approaches and collegial attitude and practice.

UiB publishes annual incentive funds to support development projects that contribute to increased quality in education. UiB has an internal award for quality in education called the Owl Award, which is awarded annually to an academic community or an individual who can document particularly successful measures regarding quality in education.

2.2 QUALITY CONTROL AND REACCREDITATION

The educational provision and quality of education at UiB is regularly checked. Each course is evaluated at least every three years, while each programme of study and one-year programme are evaluated for reaccreditation at least every six years. One-year programmes that are part of a bachelor's programme can be evaluated as part of the programme of study in question.

Reaccreditation is an academic assessment of whether a higher educational institution or a programme of study meets the standards and criteria stipulated by the Ministry and NOKUT. UiB is self-accrediting, meaning that the university itself can decide to establish a programme of study without applying to NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) for accreditation.

The evaluations must ensure that the study programmes are of high quality and meet the requirements specified in Chapter 1.2, as well as in national guidelines and framework requirements for the programmes where these exist. The evaluation must also ensure that the programme of study is academically and educationally up-to-date.

2.3 SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CONTROL OF QUALITY IN EDUCATION

Quality development support

A central *learning design group*, with representatives from the Program for University Pedagogy (UPED) and UiB Learning Lab, offers guidance on the design of new study programmes, quality development in existing study programmes and the redesign of study programmes.

In addition, the faculties will have their own schemes ensuring that the academic communities receive guidance in the quality development of educational programmes based on the specific nature of the subjects involved.

Quality control support

One central committee and faculty-specific *quality of education committees* will assess whether new and established study programmes meet the accreditation requirements. Academic management and students must be represented on the committees.

The Central Quality of Education Committee is appointed by UiB's Education Committee. The committee is responsible for assessing whether new study programmes comply with applicable legal and regulatory requirements, and for assessing whether new study programmes comply with UiB's strategic ambitions regarding quality in education and the faculties' long-term plan for programmes and courses. Based on this assessment, the committee makes a recommendation on the establishment of study programmes to the Education Committee, which in turn makes a recommendation to the University Board.

The faculty-specific quality of education committees are appointed by the faculties and are responsible for assessing whether the evaluated study programmes and one-year programmes meet the regulatory requirements, and give their assessment to the faculty board in question. The faculty board in question adopts reaccreditation or issues directives for improvement.

External peers and representatives from working life

National regulations require that external peers and representatives from working life must contribute to evaluations, cf. Section 2-1 (2) of the Regulations concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education. These are relevant sources regarding the systematic collection of information used to assess the quality of all study programmes, cf. Section 4-1 (4) of the Academic Supervision Regulations.

All study programmes and one-year programmes at UiB must have appointed persons from outside the institution, who contribute to quality development and quality control: An external peer from a higher education institution and a representative from working life (trade and industry, public administration, research, cultural life, etc). The same person may be appointed in several study programmes.

External peers must also contribute on the Central Quality of Education Committee in connection with the establishment of new study programmes.

2.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN QUALITY IN EDUCATION WORK

Responsibilities for the systematic quality work in educational programmes follow the academic roles described in the table below. The figure shows the functions that have formal responsibilities in the systematic quality work at UiB.

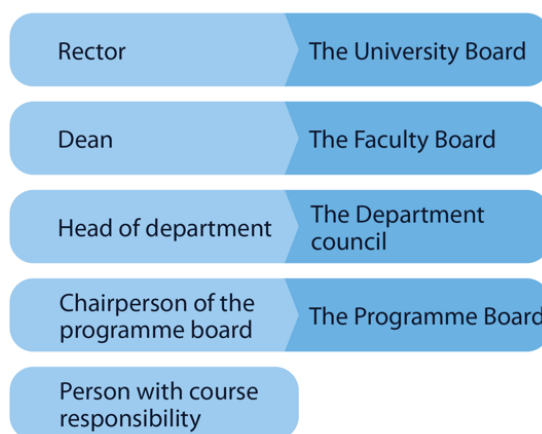


Figure 2: Roles and responsibilities for the systematic quality in education work

Faculties and educational programmes that are organised differently from the main model shown in the figure must ensure that all areas of responsibility in the systematic quality work are appropriately addressed. The person responsible may delegate the work.

All courses must have a designated course coordinator in the semesters when the course is taught. The head of department appoints the course coordinator. All study programmes and shorter programmes, such as one-year programmes, are led by a programme board with a chairperson. The head of department appoints the programme board and its chairperson.

Responsible party	Tasks
Course coordinator	Responsible for:
	Implementation of the course.
	Continuous assessments and contributions to further academic development of the course and the course's position in the programme of study
	Course evaluation at least every three years according to the established plan
	Follow-up of input and feedback from students and communication back to students
Chairperson of the programme board	Responsible for:
	Quality and coherence of the programme of study or one-year programme, and regulatory requirements through the continuous and systematic quality work
	Preparation of course evaluation plans for courses included in the programme of study
	Programme evaluation and evaluation of one-year programmes according to the established plan
	Preparation of the plan for and collection of input from students and external peers and representatives from working life in the evaluations, and follow-up of evaluations.

Head of department	Responsible for:
	Preparation and further development of a long-term plan for the programmes and courses at the department
	A comprehensive plan for evaluating courses, study programmes and one-year programmes and follow-up in order for the department's programmes and courses to meet legal and regulatory requirements
	Facilitating the development of quality in education through conversations, dialogue and meetings about educational quality, and sharing experiences from successful quality work for further development
	Facilitating skills development for educators and educational leaders in educational quality work
	Routines for knowledge transfer when programme management or course responsibilities shift from one employee to another
	The department's annual quality in education report
	Ensuring student involvement in processes and decisions with implications for study programmes and learning environments
Dean	Responsible for:
	Ensuring that the faculty's programmes and courses meet legal and regulatory requirements
	Preparing and further developing a comprehensive and long-term plan for the faculty's portfolio of programmes and courses, which aligns with UiB's strategic ambitions
	Establishing a general schedule for systematic review of the faculty's portfolio of programmes and courses, with specification of the year for various programme evaluations and their follow-up
	Presenting documentation about reaccreditation, establishment and discontinuation of study programmes to the faculty board, and forwarding the application for the establishment and discontinuation of study programmes to the University Board
	Ensuring improvement of study programmes after programme evaluations, based on recommendations from the faculty's quality of education committee
	Providing good support to educators and flexible frameworks for varied teaching methods and forms of assessment
	Conducting dialogue meetings on education with the departments and participating in dialogue meetings on education with university management
	Preparing an annual quality in education report that is presented to the faculty board, based on dialogue with the departments
	Ensuring student involvement in processes and decisions with implications for study programmes and learning environments
	Ensuring that contact with working life and society is maintained and that the relevance of the programmes to working life and society is made visible
Rector	Responsible for:
	The Quality System for Education
	The entirety of the university's overall portfolio of study programmes and courses, and that these meet legal and regulatory requirements

	Facilitating a collegial culture of collaboration on educational quality, work on student-active learning and contact with working life
	Carrying out dialogue meetings with the faculties' leadership based on the faculties' quality in education reports
	The annual quality in education report for the university based on the quality in education reports from the faculties, which are presented to the University Board
	Presenting the case to the University Board on the establishment and discontinuation of study programmes, according to applications from the faculties
	Ensuring student involvement in processes and decisions with implications for study programmes and learning environments

3 PROCESS DESCRIPTION FOR DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of the development part of the quality system is to promote collegial collaboration on the development of quality in education. This is based on continuous dialogue and work on quality in education at the units, long-term and strategic development of the educational provision, a research-based approach and sharing of experience from quality development measures. The work is supported by continuous assessments at the course and programme levels, regular feedback from students, annual quality in education reports at the department, faculty and central levels, as well as annual dialogue meetings on education between department and faculty management, and between faculty and university management.

Continuous evaluation at course and programme levels

Development work with continuous evaluation should be documented for the unit's collective memory and further work on quality improvement. This work forms the basis for the department's quality in education report. There is no specific annual reporting requirement for courses and study programmes.

Annual quality in education reports and dialogue meetings

1. Institute management prepares an annual quality in education report for faculty management. This report provides a brief description of the development work in relation to quality in education and the priorities of the institute.

2. Faculty management conducts annual dialogue meetings with the department management, based on the departments' quality in education reports, and prepares a quality in education report for the faculty.

3. The university management carries out annual dialogue meetings with the faculties based on the faculties' quality in education reports. Based on these reports, UiB's annual quality in education report is prepared and presented to the Education Committee and the University Board.

The following topics are included in the faculties' and UiB's quality in education reports, in addition to any requests from the university management:

- Follow-up of the previous year's quality in education report
- Main conclusions from dialogue meetings
- Completed and scheduled course and programme evaluations
- Any changes to the faculties' long-term plan for programmes and courses

- Plans and priorities that are connected to the university's strategy and the development agreement with the Ministry of Education and Research.

The scope of the quality in education reports from the departments and faculties may vary and the faculties may conduct dialogue meetings with several departments collectively.

Long-term plans for programmes and courses

Faculties are to have academically justified long-term plans for a comprehensive and broad portfolio of programmes and courses for all subject areas at the faculties. The plans must be in accordance with UiB's strategic ambitions and revised when necessary. Any changes to the plans for the portfolio of programmes and courses must be discussed in the quality in education reports.

4 PROCESS DESCRIPTION OF CONTROL AND CYCLICAL PROCESSES

The process of evaluation and reaccreditation of the established study programmes aims to safeguard and strengthen the quality of UiB's study programmes and to ensure that the educational provision meets the quality requirements described above.

In addition to evaluations of courses and programmes, the control section of the quality system also includes the establishment and discontinuation of study programmes.

4.1 EVALUATION OF ESTABLISHED STUDY PROGRAMMES

Schematic description of cyclical quality control processes in education: Schematic description of cyclical quality control processes in education:

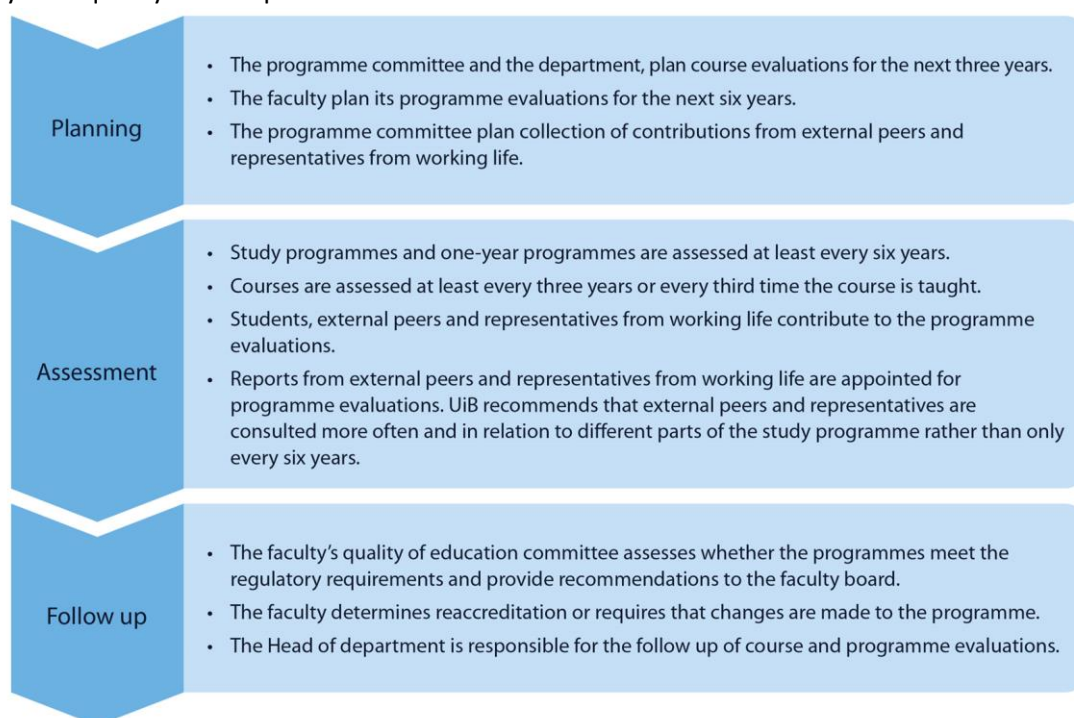


Figure 3: Schematic description of cyclical processes for quality control in education

Course evaluation

All courses are to be evaluated at least every third time the course is taught (for courses taught less frequently than once a year).

Course evaluation must include:

- Information about follow-up and any adjustments since the last course evaluation
- Assessment of academic content, connection to research in the field and coherence between the course and the study programmes in which the course is included
- Assessment of pedagogical choices, alignment between the course's descriptors, teaching, forms of learning and assessment and reflection on student learning and implementation resulting from the assessments
- Results from student evaluations and any other feedback relevant to the course
- Assessment of the alignment between the students' workload and the credit allocation
- In cases where the course includes supervised professional training or other schemes regarding contact with working life, evaluations must be made as to whether the scheme is functioning satisfactorily.

The course coordinator is academically responsible for conducting the course evaluation. The course coordinator submits a report summarising the results and proposing improvement measures where applicable. The report is published along with the main results from the student evaluations, and a plan for how the report should be followed up. The head of department is primarily responsible for following up the evaluation report.

Programme evaluation

All study programmes and one-year programmes are to be evaluated at least every six years. Programme evaluation ensures that the requirements stipulated in the Regulations concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education and in the Academic Supervision Regulations have been met. UiB recommends the available template.

The programme evaluation shall result in a report that provides an assessment of whether the requirements stipulated in Sections 3-1 to 3-3 of the Regulations concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education and in Chapter 2 of the Academic Supervision Regulations, cf. also Section 4-1 (3), are met in the programme of study, with particular focus on any changes made since accreditation or the last reaccreditation.

The following points must also be included:

- A summary of how the previous evaluation was followed up
- Compliance with any national curriculum regulations and guidelines for the programme.
- Input from students and external peers and representatives from working life
- Assessment of recruitment, implementation, candidate production and contact with working life

The report is to contain proposals for improvements where needed. The chairperson of the programme board is responsible for coordinating the work on the evaluation and the submission of the report.

Evaluation of supervised professional training

Supervised professional training may be in the form of a separate course or be integrated into a programme of study. Supervised professional training may be carried out at an institution, school,

organisation or company in Norway or abroad. The academic responsibility for supervised professional training is the same as for courses and study programmes. A supervised professional training collaboration agreement must be entered into between the department/faculty and the facilities of training.

The responsibility for quality assurance of the supervised professional training and the external partner where supervised professional training is carried out lies with the academic community that owns the relevant course or programme of study. Students are to evaluate the supervised professional training once the period of training has been completed.

Reaccreditation of study programmes

Once the programme evaluation has been completed, the faculty's quality of education committee are to assess whether the evaluated programme of study can be reaccredited, meaning that the programme of study still meets legal and regulatory requirements related to the educational provision.

The quality of education committee shall provide the faculty board with a recommendation as to whether the programme can be reaccredited, or recommend improvements deemed necessary for the programme to be reaccredited. Based on the recommendation, the faculty board either decides that the programme can be reaccredited without changes, or issues directives regarding changes to the programme of study in order to meet regulatory requirements including a timeframe for completion. The faculty or department will be instructed to implement the necessary changes and improvements within the given timeframe in order for the quality of the programme to be restored.

Evaluation of interdisciplinary and inter-faculty study programmes is carried out in collaboration with the faculties or departments involved. The unit where the programme of study is located is responsible for coordinating the collaboration.

The programme board is responsible for ensuring that all involved subjects, faculties and units are adequately informed and heard in the programme evaluation, as well as for ensuring that the local quality of education committee has all available information for the reaccreditation process.

The Central Quality of Education Committee at UiB may, on its own initiative or upon special request, make assessments of existing study programmes.

4.2 ESTABLISHMENT AND DISCONTINUATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

The faculty board may decide to apply to the University Board to establish or discontinue a programme of study. Both the establishment and discontinuation of study programmes must be in accordance with UiB's strategy and with the owner faculty's applicable long-term plans for its portfolio of programmes and courses.

An application for the establishment of a new programme of study is to demonstrate that the criteria set out in the Regulations concerning Quality Assurance and Quality Development in Higher Education and Tertiary Vocational Education and in the Academic Supervision Regulations have been met. The Central Quality of Education Committee assesses whether national regulatory requirements are met in new study programmes.

Normally, the proceedings shown in the figure are followed when establishing new study programmes. The templates for programme establishment and application must be used for the establishment of all new programmes.

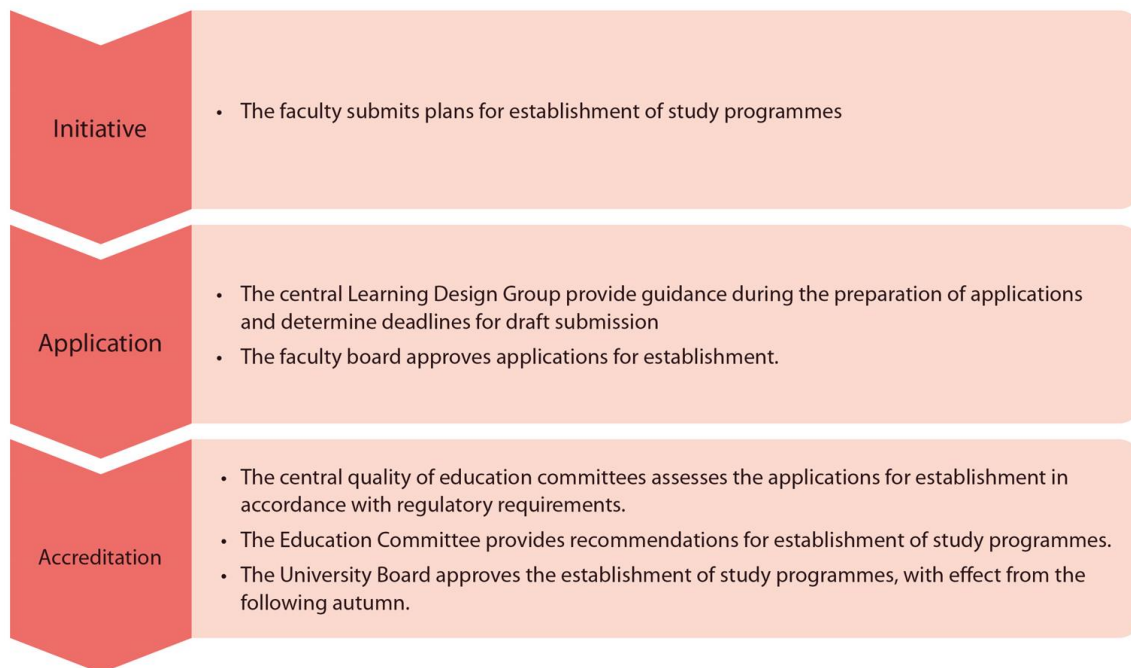


Figure 4: Course of proceedings for establishment of study programmes

The faculty board decides to apply for the establishment and discontinuation of study programmes based on the faculty's strategic plan for its portfolio of programmes and courses. The final application for the establishment of a new programme of study will be assessed by the Central Quality of Education Committee, which gives its recommendation for accreditation to the Education Committee. The Education Committee gives its recommendation for the establishment and discontinuation of study programmes to the University Board. The University Board makes a final decision about establishment and discontinuation.

5. INTER-FACULTY STUDY PROGRAMMES

The rules for the establishment, operation, quality development and evaluation of inter-faculty programmes are identical to those for other study programmes at UiB. Importantly, a clear division of responsibilities is to be established between faculties when several are involved.

The administrative responsibilities for the programme must be assigned one faculty which in turn appoints a programme board. Other departments and faculties contributing to the programme are to be represented on the programme board. Members are obligated to report from the programme board meetings to their own department/faculty management. Through participation in the programme, collaborating academic communities are obligated to provide teaching according to the established schedule in the courses that are included in the programme description for the entire programme period. Collaborating faculties should take into account that courses included in inter-faculty programmes place greater demands on scheduling and timetabling.

6. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Learning Environment Committee

The Learning Environment Committee (LMU) at UiB has been appointed in accordance with Section 4-3 (3) of the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges. The Learning Environment Committee is an advisory body responsible for following up questions related to the university's physical and psychosocial learning environment. The Learning Environment Committee prepares, updates and follows up UiB's action plan for management of the learning environment.

Learning Environment Reports

The Learning Environment Committee is informed twice a year about the scope and type of reports relating to the physical and social learning environment. The reports come from Speak up, the HSE non-conformities system and other channels.

Speak up is a system for students and staff who wish to report both negative and positive aspects related to the learning environment. The system contains procedures for receiving, processing and reporting notifications. Registration happens electronically via *Nettskjema*. The notifications are processed by separate faculty-level reception groups that distribute the follow-up of the cases to the appropriate body. Cases that are marked as serious are prioritised at the central level, and forwarded, if required, to faculty level.

Learning Environment Award

UiB annually presents the Learning Environment Award based on decisions made by the Learning Environment Committee. All students and student organisations may nominate candidates. The purpose of the award is to give recognition to environments or individuals at UiB who have facilitated learning particularly well through academic, educational and social efforts, or through improvements of the physical and/or psychosocial learning environment.

Student Ombudsman

The Student Ombudsman is an independent support person who gives advice and assistance to students at the University of Bergen in matters related to their study situation. The Student Ombudsman ensures that cases are processed in a correct and responsible manner and safeguard the students' rights. The Student Ombudsman has a duty of confidentiality, and contact can be made without obligation.

Student participation

UiB and all the faculties are responsible for ensuring that the competence that student democracy represents through expert committees, student committees and student councils etc., is used in the work on quality in education at all levels of the organisation. Student participation is therefore integrated into all processes significant to quality assurance work. Students are to be represented by at least 20% of members of all decision-making bodies.

Physical and digital infrastructure

Both the faculties and the university are responsible for support systems and infrastructure for teaching and learning activities. Important support systems in this context include services at the University Library, the Division of Student and Academic Affairs, the Estate and Facilities Management division, and the IT Division.

Mentoring scheme

UiB offers a mentoring scheme to all first-year students pursuing degree studies. The purpose of the mentoring scheme is to help new students become academically and socially integrated into their programme of study and the study environment, and that the transition from upper secondary school to university is supported. Mentors are experienced students participating in the same programme of study as first-year students. The mentoring schemes are usually organised into fixed groups where students and one or more mentors meet regularly. However, there may be variations in how faculties organise the mentoring scheme.