



Norwegian Ministry
of Education and Research

Meld. St. 7 (2020–2021) Report to the Storting (white paper)

A world of opportunities

International student mobility in higher education



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Introduction – The world in the pandemic era

The spring of 2020 has made it abundantly clear just how much we depend on each other and just how interwoven the world is. International collaboration and cross-border dialogue are essential to address the major global challenges the world is facing. Global challenges require global solutions.

The pandemic has resulted in massive challenges for the whole of society, around the world. Within higher education, students, teachers and researchers all had to stay at home. The institutions quickly managed to switch to fully digital operation, and the students had to adapt to studying from home.

When international borders started closing in spring 2020, the vast majority of the students who were studying abroad returned home. Degree students abroad were also heavily impacted by the pandemic. It quickly became clear that most institutions would unfortunately have to cancel their student exchanges planned for the autumn 2020 semester. In addition, solutions had to be found for all students who had already been affected by disrupted stays abroad in the spring semester.

Against this backdrop, the Government realised that it was not appropriate to present this white paper as planned in spring 2020, when thousands of Norwegian students were having to return home from abroad. The pandemic is still ongoing, and only a few higher education institutions are offering international exchanges this autumn. We have nevertheless decided to publish this white paper now. The reasoning behind this decision is that the ambitions presented in this white paper are long-term and central to the Government's policies. At the same time, the pandemic has demonstrated that there is a great need for international collaboration and thus also international experience.

The Government assumes that higher education will return to a normal situation as soon as it is safe to do so. In terms of international student mobility, the goal is not only to get back to the way things were before, but to surpass it – we need to achieve both better and more international cooperation. In the future, far more students must go abroad to study, and this is especially important now that the numbers are low. The analysis, ambitions and measures proposed in this white paper are long-term and must be able to stand the test of time. Under the ongoing pandemic, the content of this white paper may seem less relevant and workable, but it is nevertheless a clear expression of the Government's long-term policies in this area. Depending on the development of the pandemic and access to vaccines, it may take longer for the ambitions in this white paper to be realised.

We need graduates from Norwegian higher education institutions who have international experience and international competence, because this kind of knowledge and intercultural understanding are essential for Norway's future and our ability to resolve the challenges the world is facing. This is so important that we need to start thinking about this now and adopt a long-term mindset, even as we struggle with the current global crisis that overshadows everything else. With this white paper, we are laying the foundation for the work to realise the Government's ambitions for international student mobility in higher education when things one day return to normal. After all, there is a world of opportunities out there!

A world of opportunities

International student mobility in higher education

Meld. St. 7 (2020–2021) Report to the Storting (white paper)

*Recommendation from the Ministry of Education and Research of 30 October 2020,
approved by the Council of State on the same date.
(The Solberg Government)*

1 The Government's policy for international student mobility

1.1 Internationalisation and student mobility

Higher education of good quality is essential for the future development of society. The current global challenges, coupled with the need for a number of major societal adjustments in Norway, result in the need for highly qualified people with a wide range of competencies. The education system must evolve to meet these needs. Increased internationalisation and international cooperation are necessary to ensure good quality in Norwegian higher education. The Government established this in the white paper Report no. 16 to the Storting (2016–2017) *Quality culture in higher education* (the “Quality Report”). Like research, education must also be developed through collaboration and comparison with excellent partners abroad. International exposure and cooperation add valuable perspectives to programmes of education – and thereby also the students – that can raise the quality of education in the broadest sense. International cooperation and international perspectives are necessary to address the global challenges facing society today linked to climate change, technology, demographics and democracy. At the same time, they can underpin Norway's broader interests related to foreign policy, development policy and business policy through increased networks, knowledge and expertise. In Norway too, society

and the workplace are becoming increasingly international, and the importance of the kind of knowledge, expertise and skills that greater internationalisation can help foster will only grow going forwards.

Within education, internationalisation can be achieved in many different ways; the main prerequisite is an internationally oriented, active academic environment. Internationalisation may be related to the content of the syllabus, the students being introduced to international perspectives, or the nurturing of an international learning environment. It is the Government's goal for higher education in Norway that the students are part of a learning environment that also includes international students.

In addition to the Government's desire to promote various forms of increased internationalisation of the syllabus, programmes and the learning environment at home in Norway, it is also a goal that far more students will go abroad for a study or training period, and it is this aspect of internationalisation that is the main topic of this white paper. In the Quality Report, the Government determined that in the longer term it should be a goal that half of all students have a learning period abroad during the course of their studies.

A study period abroad will help improve the quality of Norwegian higher education and research and promote the individual student's academic and personal development; it will also help

evolve society and increase Norway’s capacity for change and ability to compete.

International student mobility is about improving higher education by exposing Norwegian students and campuses to international ideas, perspectives and knowledge. Schemes should be made that enable students to go to institutions abroad that their home institution has already established academic ties with and has quality assured. In addition, outbound full-degree students and exchange students ought to be encouraged to take education in countries that are of particular relevance to Norway and at high-quality institutions.

A study period abroad will provide students with international experience that will make them better equipped to participate in a European and globalised working and business landscape. In addition, international student mobility should support liberal democratic values – values that are increasingly coming under pressure in the modern world. Bringing young people together can help bridge national tensions, provide better intercultural understanding, and help challenge anti-democratic and xenophobic forces. Citizens of tomorrow will need new skills in a society that is increasingly global, multicultural and digital. International student mobility can help shape the society of the future for the better by allowing students to explore and hone their views against the views of people from a different background. Higher education institutions must work together to resolve society’s problems and improve the quality of their research and education. Through binding cooperation, countries must facilitate international mobility for pupils, students and researchers.

The Nordic countries work together to create a good education and research community in terms of mobility, quality, and political priorities. Important objectives for the European cooperation through the Erasmus+ programme, the Council of Europe and the Bologna Process are the building of a common European identity, promotion of democratic values and fighting extremism. Through UNESCO, among others, Norway works with other countries to promote education and mobility on the global agenda and to ensure the achieving of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including in particular SDG 4¹ “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

¹ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/fns-barekraftsmal/id2590133/>

1.2 The Government’s ambitions

1.2.1 A change in culture

With the 2003 Quality Reform, the Storting decided that all students who wish to do so should be able to have a study period abroad as part of their Norwegian degree programme. Through the Bologna Process, Norway has committed to ensuring that by 2020, at least 20 per cent of students who complete a degree will have had a study period or a period of practical training abroad. Although this objective has existed since the Quality Reform, and was further underlined through the Bologna Process target, there has been little success in getting more students to go abroad.

The white paper Report no. 16 to the Storting (2016–2017) *Quality culture in higher education* (the “Quality Report”) expresses an ambition that in the longer-term half of all graduates from Norwegian higher education will have had a study period abroad. At the same time, the Quality Report stresses that the academic quality of learning periods abroad must be ensured, and that academic communities and institutions must participate actively in international cooperation.

The overarching goal of this white paper is to contribute to a cultural change in the higher education sector such that international mobility becomes an integral part of all programmes of study, making it possible to achieve the Government’s target that half of all graduates from Norwegian higher education will have had a study period abroad. Clear expectations that students ought to have a learning period abroad can be defined by students actively having to opt out if they cannot or do not wish to go abroad.

This kind of cultural change will take time, and the following five factors can contribute to the change:

1. Student mobility is included as part of the strategic work to strengthen the quality and relevance of higher education.
2. Student mobility is based on institutional partnerships, usually covering both research and education.
3. Regulations and funding schemes are designed to stimulate increased student mobility.
4. The management, academic staff and administration at the institutions, as well as the students themselves, support and work towards this kind of cultural change.
5. Employers and industry express a wish for and value graduates with overseas experience.

1.2.2 Student mobility as part of the quality work

Raising the quality of higher education and research is one of the Government's priority projects. International student mobility is essential to achieve this goal.

The white paper Report no. 16 to the Storting (2016–2017) *Quality culture in higher education* (the "Quality Report") states that internationalisation should be used as a strategic measure for raising quality in education. All study programmes must have internationalisation measures, including international student mobility. The main forms of internationalisation are:

- student and staff exchanges
- teaching collaborations (guest lecturers, academic supervision)
- collaboration on the development of educational opportunities (seminars, courses)
- collaboration on degree programmes such as double or joint degrees

As the Quality Report points out, a range of definitions and understandings of the term "quality" exists. Quality is about maintaining standards and meeting expectations and demands. However, it also encompasses variation, diversity, development and innovation, effectiveness and relevance.² The students shall encounter requirements and expectations in the form of clearly defined learning outcomes for a study period abroad. It is also essential that the students see how the study period abroad can be incorporated into their degree, and that it is academically relevant to the study programme. Each exchange agreement must be adapted to the level, scope and nature of the study programme (cf. the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education's (NOKUT) *Academic Supervision Regulations*³).

The academic groups at the institutions are responsible for developing cohesive study programmes with good academic progress. The programmes shall build on up-to-date research in the field and have learning outcome descriptors defining what competencies students will have acquired on successful completion of the programme. In connection with periods of study abroad, there must be a close collaboration

² Cf. Harvey & Green's (1993) widely referenced definition of quality.

³ *Regulation no. 137 of 7 February 2017 concerning supervision of the educational quality in higher education*. Available at https://www.nokut.no/siteassets/om-nokut/nokut_academic_supervisions_regulations.pdf.

between the Norwegian institution and the foreign institution ahead of the period abroad, so that the students know in advance what will be required of them academically during their time abroad, and how the study period abroad fits into the study programme.

1.3 Consultation responses from universities and university colleges

On 1 October 2018, a number of stakeholders were invited to provide input to this white paper through a consultation process.⁴ It is stressed in the consultation responses received that a prerequisite for realisation of the long-term ambition that half of students take part of their degree abroad is that student mobility becomes a more integrated part of the study programmes. In addition, the academic relevance and learning outcomes of the periods spent abroad must be clearly highlighted. The information provided to the students must be good and easily accessible, and good guidance and motivation from academic employees ahead of the period spent abroad are essential for students to decide to embark on a study period abroad, and so that they are able to prepare properly.

In addition, there must be full support for student mobility at the institutional management level and the programme coordinator level. Further, employee mobility is an important factor in motivating students to venture out. Although there is wide variation between disciplines and institutions, the vast majority of the stakeholders that submitted a consultation response point out that it can be demanding to arrange student mobility of at least three months' duration in all study programmes, which is the current requirement for the study or training period abroad to trigger performance-based funding in the funding system for universities and university colleges. They therefore argue that mobility stays of less than three months, so-called short-term mobility, ought also to be included in the performance-based indicator for student mobility in the funding system. Furthermore, visiting international students must be integrated into the studies to a greater extent, and better use must be made of the experiences that returning students have gained abroad in the study environment in Nor-

⁴ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/invitasjon-til-a-komme-med-innspill-til-stortingsmeldingen-om-internasjonal-studentmobilitet/id2611424/>

way. This is important both to enrich the education provided in Norway and to motivate other students to travel abroad as part of their studies. Another point that is raised in the consultation input is that the institutions must have a sufficient number of courses available in English to be able to attract international students, and that internationalisation must be centrally anchored in strategies and action plans, so that there is a clear expectation from the outset that the students will be expected to study abroad for a period.

The Government shares these opinions and is aware that it will take time to achieve the goals. To date, only 16 per cent of graduates have had a study period abroad during the course of their studies. Through the Bologna Process, Norway has committed to ensuring that by 2020, at least 20 per cent of graduates will have had a study or training period abroad during the course of their studies.

The Government's ambition that *in the long run* half of all students will have a study or training period abroad will require a considerable amount of work from the universities and university colleges.

The consultation input confirms that students often find that international student mobility is not a natural part of their study programme and that it is difficult to find relevant information. The institutions state that more administrative resources will be needed to facilitate a study period abroad for a significantly higher number of students, and that it will be demanding to implement a cultural change.

In addition, there is wide variance in the degree to which the institutions and study programmes succeed in sending their students overseas. There is also wide variance between different study programmes within a single institution and between corresponding study programmes at different institutions. There are also differences between types of education, with much lower mobility within teacher education than social sciences and law, for example.

The input to the white paper nevertheless reveals willingness to work to achieve the ambition that half of all students will have a study period abroad in the longer term. This is promising, and the purpose of this white paper is to stake out a path for how we can achieve this ambition together.

1.4 Norway in an international context

International collaboration and cross-border dialogue are prerequisites for adapting to changes and global challenges. This has been expressed in

several places, including the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, Nordic cooperation and Norway's Europe policy, which are the main pillars of Norway's foreign policy.

Norway's policy for education and research must serve to support broad foreign policy, development policy and industrial policy interests.

A key goal for Norway's foreign policy is to support binding international cooperation and the multilateral system, in order to address common challenges and safeguard Norwegian and global interests (cf. white paper Report no. 27 to the Storting (2018–2019) *Norway's role and interests in multilateral cooperation*). The multilateral system is a network of agreements and organisations established by the world's states. This system has multiple functions. It is, among other things, an arena where states can meet and cooperate on common challenges, resulting in new standards and common rules. Multilateral international cooperation is crucial to Norway's national security, welfare and economy. It is easy to take international cooperation for granted, but the liberal world order, which has been crucial to the development of the multilateral system, is currently under mounting pressure.⁵ A tendency can be observed away from attempting to resolve common challenges through compromise and cooperation via multilateral organisations, and towards large states preferring to work bilaterally, which is not to the advantage of a small country like Norway. Education in Norway benefits from and is an important part of multilateral cooperation, and student exchange can promote the kinds of values that the liberal world order needs.

Norway is involved in cooperation on education in a wide range of areas, such as the EU/EEA, the Bologna Process, the Council of Europe, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the OECD and UNESCO.

Through the EEA Agreement, Norway participates in the world's largest educational programme Erasmus+, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sports. European countries are Norway's close allies, and the EU is Norway's main trading partner.⁶ Norway and the EU agree on a

⁵ In its post-war form, the liberal world order rests on a set of common rules and liberal values, such as individual rights and liberties, the rule of law, democracy, and open, market-based economies and free trade (cf. Report no. 27 to the Storting (2018–2019) *Norway's role and interests in multilateral cooperation*, paragraph 3.4).

⁶ https://www.regjeringen.no/en/historical-archive/solbergs-government/andre-dokumenter/ud/2018/eu_strategy/id2600561/

number of issues in international politics, including views on free trade, multilateralism and the need for binding international cooperation on climate change. Erasmus+ helps to educate new, change-adept generations. Since 1992, approximately 83,000 Norwegian students, pupils, apprentices, youth workers and teachers have participated in Erasmus+ or one of its predecessors and received scholarships to go on an exchange to an EU country. Participation in Erasmus+ contri-

butes to stronger, better international education cooperation at all levels. Erasmus+ makes Norwegian higher education more relevant, the students become more attractive on the employment market, at the same time as the individual student has opportunities for academic and personal development that promote democratic values that are constantly being challenged.

Nordplus, the Nordic Council of Ministers' largest education programme, aims to strengthen

Box 1.1 Key concepts

What is international student mobility? International student mobility can be subdivided into outbound full-degree students, inbound full-degree students, and exchange students (inbound and outbound). However, in addition to these three main categories, this white paper will also discuss short-term mobility (less than three months) as well as “virtual exchanges” or “virtual mobility”, which, with the current increase in digitalisation, may become a central part of student exchange going forwards. Training mobility and other work and industry-related forms of mobility are also covered by the concept of mobility, such as doing all or part of the supervised professional training that is a compulsory part of regulated educations in another country. These types of mobility have a different dynamic and different impacts, and often also have different policy instruments associated with them. The Government is calling for a cultural change to ensure a greater focus on internationalisation, and this can be achieved through different types of mobility.

- *Mobility*: the flow of students, researchers and administrative staff across borders for shorter or longer academic stays.
- *Mobility window*: the inclusion of a defined period in the structure of a study programme that can be used to take a study period abroad.
- *Outbound exchange* is when students at a Norwegian higher education institution travel abroad to study through an exchange agreement. The stay is included as part of the students' Norwegian degree.
- *Inbound exchange* is when students at a foreign institution come to Norway to study through an exchange agreement. The stay is

usually included in the students' degree at their home institution.¹

- *International full-degree students* are international students who come to Norway to take a full degree, and outbound full-degree students are Norwegian students who travel abroad to take a full degree.
- *International training mobility* means students doing a work placement, traineeships or period of practical training in a business or organisation in another country as part of their studies.
- *Short-term mobility* refers to mobility of less than three months' duration. The term includes both exchange (short-term mobility through exchange agreements) and other forms of periods spent abroad, such as fieldwork, courses, data collection, etc.
- *Virtual exchange or virtual mobility*² can take place within the same academic framework as other forms of exchange, with the difference that students do not travel physically. Virtual exchanges can be used in all disciplines and must be part of the students' study programme. The exchange must be based on a learning contract between the students and the institutions, with the teaching taking place at the partner institution.
- *Blended mobility* means a combination of physical mobility (including short-term mobility) and virtual exchange.

¹ Not everyone gets their study period abroad approved as part of a domestic degree. This applies in particular to students from outside the EU and the EEA.

² The terminology used in this area has not been defined definitively. Both “virtual exchange” and “virtual mobility” are used for forms of digital international cooperation that seek to achieve many of the benefits of an overseas exchange without physical travel.

and develop Nordic education cooperation. Good cooperation with our closest neighbours in the Nordic region is important.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal on education aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. Academic cooperation and reciprocal student mobility between higher education institutions are important parts of this work.

1.5 Adapting for the future

The white paper Report no. 29 to the Storting (2016–2017) *Long-term perspectives on the Norwegian economy 2017* presented the challenges Norway expects to face in the future and the Government's strategy to meet these challenges. The white paper states that Norway is currently in a good position, but that we must be prepared for changes in the future. Today, employment is high, the country is endowed with vast natural resources, and public finances are on a solid footing. The labour force is highly skilled, due in large part to a strong education system. Income and wealth are more evenly distributed than in most other countries. However, from 2030, public spending will increase more rapidly than the revenues if we do not make adjustments. There will be a higher proportion of senior people in the population, who will live for longer. In 10–15 years, the growth in public expenditure will outpace that in public revenues. The oil and gas sector will no longer contribute to economic growth to the same extent as in the past; on the contrary, its importance will decline. This mismatch between spending and revenues, often referred to as the "financing gap", means we will need to do things differently in the future. In the white paper, the Government referred to strategies to safeguard the welfare of future generations: increasing participation in the labour market and improving efficiency in the public sector.

In the white paper Report no. 4 to the Storting (2018–2019) *Long-term plan for research and higher education 2019–2028*, the Government presents its plans to facilitate growth in overall value creation, create new profitable jobs, restructure the Norwegian economy and implement the transition towards a greener society. It is important to fulfil Norway's climate obligations and take part in the joint global effort to facilitate widespread sustainability. As the digital transformation gains momentum, it is essential to create inclusive

workplaces, reduce poverty and boost integration. Norway wants to be an active democracy and encourage its citizens to get involved and to build an active civil society.

The white paper *Long-term perspectives on the Norwegian economy 2017* and the long-term plan for research and higher education both recognise the necessity of a good education system not only for the restructuring that Norway must undergo, but also to develop engaged citizens and an active democracy and to maintain the Norwegian welfare society. Research and higher education play a key role in the development of a society that is environmentally, socially, culturally, economically and politically sustainable. The challenges presented in the white paper *Long-term perspectives on the Norwegian economy 2017* and the long-term plan for research and higher education, among others, require international cooperation, and student mobility plays a pivotal role in this cooperation.

The education sector must also reduce its carbon footprint, in view of the current situation regarding climate change. The increase in travel as a result of increased international student mobility must be weighed up against the changes currently being implemented at higher education institutions and in society at large in connection with the green shift. The Government nevertheless believes that the value of international student mobility justifies it being given high priority. A learning period abroad may be the most important trip a student makes during their entire lifetime, and the Government would stress that this recognition must underlie a student's decision to take all or part of their education overseas. However, it is important to make conscious choices about physical travel. Research and education are necessary to resolve global challenges, including challenges related to climate change, and this requires students and scientists to meet in person as well as virtually. This does not mean that students and staff do not need to think about their climate footprint when choosing a place of study. There are already financial incentives (Nordplus, Erasmus+) for students to choose the Nordic countries and the EU/EEA, i.e. local areas that can be travelled to using more environmentally friendly means. Cultural diversity beyond Europe is also important, and travel to our priority partner countries outside Europe will also continue. These elements play a role when students choose more remote destinations, and also for the institutions when they establish exchange agreements. The use of technology to enable virtual meetings

and add greater diversity to Norwegian campuses can serve to increase internationalisation without increasing the carbon footprint (cf. chapter 4). In other words, it is a question of striking a balance between the various considerations, and the Government is very confident that the institutions, students and staff will manage to find a good balance between increased mobility and a reduction in carbon footprint. In addition, the Government will follow developments in the new Erasmus+ programme closely, the crux of which is and will continue to be mobility. One of the ambitions for the Erasmus+ programme is to contribute to carbon neutrality in Europe.

The Government is also working on a white paper on labour market relevance in higher education. Society invests significant amounts of funding in higher education with the goal that graduates will acquire relevant skills and expertise and use them for the good of society as a whole. The quality of Norwegian higher education is generally good, but the current rapid changes in working life entail considerable uncertainty about the future. The Government will return to the issue of how to improve the quality and relevance of higher education through better and more reciprocal cooperation between academia and industry in the forthcoming white paper on labour market relevance in higher education. The goal is that the students will be better prepared for the transition to working life and that the labour market will gain access to relevant competencies that can contribute to positive development and restructuring.

1.6 Delimitations

The focus of this white paper is international student mobility in higher education, but all the evidence suggests that international mobility earlier in life, such as mobility through youth work and in upper secondary education and training, including in connection with language learning, has implications for the proclivity for mobility among students in higher education, in the same way that mobility in higher education has an impact on proclivity for mobility among PhD students and researchers. This white paper does not deal with mobility at the doctoral level, but the correlation between mobility at school and mobility in higher education is touched upon briefly below.

International experience and international cooperation are important in all types of education, including vocational colleges. The Government will discuss how to promote international

cooperation in tertiary vocational education in more detail in both its forthcoming work on the strategy for tertiary vocational education (vocational colleges) and in connection with the work on an Erasmus+ strategy.

1.6.1 International mobility in upper secondary education and training

International mobility is an important measure and instrument in primary and secondary education and training, as well as higher education. Pupils and staff at every level of primary and secondary education and training participate in collaborations, internationalisation initiatives and mobility through, among others, Nordplus and Erasmus+, and each year a significant number of pupils travel overseas to take the second year of upper secondary education (Vg2) in another country. The return in terms of the skills gained as a result of mobility largely coincides with the return on mobility in higher education. This was revealed in a survey conducted by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) to measure the dividends for pupils who have had a study or training period abroad in a European country as part of their vocational education and training.⁷ The survey suggests that pupils benefit greatly in terms of social skills and personal development, with improved foreign language skills and cultural understanding as important learning outcomes. By contrast, the pupils' academic benefits seem to vary according to the organisation of their stay and the pupils' role.

For the 2018–2019 school year, approximately 1,600 pupils have received support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) for overseas stays in the second year of upper secondary education (Vg2) through an exchange organisation or an agreement at the county or school level. Numbers have gone down since the peak year 2012–2013, when some 2,300 pupils went on an international exchange. In addition, each year around 450–500 pupils receive funding from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund to take their entire upper secondary education and training abroad. Most of these pupils go to other Nordic countries, under a special Nordic agreement. In a survey conducted in 2019, the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education

⁷ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019f).

(Diku) asked both current and former exchange students, primarily in the education programme for specialisation in general studies, about their benefits from the overseas stay. The results largely coincide with the aforementioned survey among pupils in vocational education and training. More than 80 per cent of pupils who went on an exchange in 2018–2019 believe that they have improved their foreign language skills, have become more independent and more self-confident, and have gained an increased understanding of other cultures. A total of 94 per cent say they would probably or definitely recommend others to choose an exchange year. The survey suggests that the benefits are long-term. The majority of the respondents find that the study period abroad has been useful in further studies.

The survey also suggests that early mobility can contribute to mobility in higher education. The proportion of students who have travelled abroad in higher education with the support of the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) is three times higher among people who went on an international exchange in the second year of upper secondary education (Vg2), than among Norwegian students in general.

Good foreign language training prepares and motivates students for increased mobility in higher education. It is therefore important that the quality of teaching in both English and other foreign languages is as high as possible. Among other things, the Government wants to introduce more compulsory English teaching and ensure that pupils in upper secondary education and training have good opportunities to choose to study foreign languages. The Government will come back to this in the forthcoming white paper on upper secondary education and training.

1.7 Overview of the white paper and summary of the proposed measures

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the political frameworks for international student mobility and current regulations and funding.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the various positive effects that international student mobility is expected to have for students, society, and the higher education institutions.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 deals with Norwegian students who choose to do part of their studies abroad through an exchange from their Norwegian educational institution.

The Government's conclusions and measures:

Which countries do Norwegian students go to?

- The Government wants a higher proportion of Norwegian students to go abroad on study or training period in non-anglophone countries than is currently the case.
- The Government wants more Norwegian students to prioritise going abroad on study or training period to the non-anglophone countries among Norway's priority partner countries in higher education and research.
- The Government wants to make changes to the regulations governing the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) in order to increase student mobility to Norway's priority partner countries, and will return to the budgetary implications in the work on the annual national budgets.

Student mobility as part of Norway's international cooperation

- The Government expects Norwegian institutions to work strategically to establish mutual, long-term cooperation with overseas institutions, with a strong focus on student mobility.
- The Government expects the internationalisation work, cooperation agreements and student mobility to be a fully integrated part of the general work at the institution.
- The Government expects cooperation agreements to be anchored in the employees' professional networks, so that the academic employees have a sense of ownership of them.
- The Government wants to encourage the institutions (especially smaller institutions and/or subjects) to enter into joint exchange agreements among themselves.
- The Government expects the higher education institutions to be aware of the challenges related to the basis for transfer of personal data to third countries where there is no decision on sufficient level of protection, and it is not possible to enter into a standard contract.

Integration of student mobility into study programmes and a system of active opt-out

- The Government’s ambition is to ensure that in the long term all institutions introduce a system whereby students must actively opt out of a learning period abroad, as opposed to having to opt in. The institutions can themselves decide how and when this is to be introduced. The study period abroad is voluntary, and students do not have to provide a reason for opting out. Higher education institutions under the Ministry of Defence are exempt from the goal of a predefined learning period abroad and introduction of a system of “active opt-out”.
- The Government expects all institutions to make arrangements to ensure that learning periods abroad are well integrated in the programmes.
- The Government’s ambition is that a study or training period abroad shall become the norm for all students on programmes where an overseas stay will provide academic benefits and is practically feasible.
- In its management dialogue with the universities and university colleges, the Government will discuss the institutions’ experiences regarding integration of a study period abroad into their study programmes and, as necessary, will assess possible measures to enable more study programmes to better facilitate international student mobility. In this context, the Government will assess whether stricter requirements need to be set regarding active opt-out.
- The Government expects the academic communities to make it clearer to students and employers how a study period overseas can help raise the academic quality of study programmes and make them more employment relevant.

Employee mobility and the link between research and higher education

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to increase the proportion of academic staff who have a mobility stay abroad, through cooperation agreements that are closely linked to the academic communities and which integrate student mobility and internationalisation into cohesive study programmes.
- The Government also finds that mobility ought to be increased among PhD students.

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to use existing research partnerships, where possible, to enter into new, quality-assured and facilitated agreements on student exchange. In these agreements, student mobility ought to be linked to the researchers’ international projects and networks.
- The Government expects the higher education institutions to enter into international cooperation agreements where research elements are included, where this is feasible in practical terms and academically appropriate.

Joint degrees

- The Government holds that the academic benefits of collaboration on joint degrees are so great that, despite the administrative challenges, it is still desirable that Norwegian higher education institutions prioritise participating in joint-degree partnerships with overseas institutions.
- The Government will consider whether to stimulate collaboration on joint degrees with Norway’s priority partner countries. Appropriate considerations must be taken, in regard to countries of which Norway does not have security policy cooperation.

European Universities

- The Government supports the European Commission’s new *European Universities* initiative and encourages Norwegian institutions to enter into alliances under this scheme.
- The Ministry of Education and Research will have dialogue with Norwegian participating institutions during the *European Universities* pilot period, in the event that obstacles arise due to national regulations.

Integration into degrees

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to organise all their study programmes with clear “mobility windows”, so that it is clear to the students when in the programme they will be expected to go abroad.
- The Government wants the institutions to make greater use of pre-approved course packages for student mobility for the study programmes. These packages will ensure that students know in advance that they will have a quality-assured study period overseas that is a fully integrated part of their Norwegian degree.

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to facilitate academically relevant mobility stays with clear academic connection between the study period abroad and the domestic study programme. The students must be informed about the expected learning outcomes for the study period overseas and how the courses they take abroad contribute to the overall learning outcomes for the study programme.
- In connection with their work on approving courses taken abroad, the Government expects the higher education institutions to follow the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which states that education taken abroad must be recognised, unless it can be proven that there are substantial differences.
- The Government will include a learning outcome descriptor for international competence in the Norwegian National Qualifications Framework to underscore the importance of having international experience and understanding for everyone who completes a degree.

Mobility of less than three months

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to continue to focus on working to increase whole semester mobility, i.e. an overseas stay of at least three months' duration, but will include mobility of between one and three months' duration in the performance-based indicator for student mobility in the funding system for universities and university colleges as soon as possible.

Programmes of professional study

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to structure all their study programmes with clearly defined mobility windows, including the programmes that lead to professional qualifications.
- The Government expects the higher education institutions to use their academic freedom and the latitude afforded to them, and show great flexibility when recognising courses taken abroad, including in the educations regulated by a national curriculum.
- The Government wants to pave the way for the implementation of pilot projects to increase mobility in the educations regulated by a national curriculum.

Compulsory supervised professional training

- The Government holds that there is potential to make better use of the periods of practical training within the educations regulated by a national curriculum than is currently the case and would encourage the institutions to take further steps to enable the students to undertake their compulsory supervised professional training abroad.
- The Government expects that inclusion of mobility stays of between one and three months in the performance-based indicator for student mobility in the funding system will lead to more students doing their compulsory supervised professional training in the programmes of professional study abroad (see section 4.5.3.1).

Other training mobility

- The Government wants the institutions to pave the way for more international training mobility through active use of schemes such as Erasmus+, at participation in the programme in the period 2021–2027, and InternAbroad.
- The Government expects that inclusion of mobility stays of between one and three months in the performance-based indicator for student mobility in the funding system for universities and university colleges will lead to more students doing a work placement abroad (see section 4.5.3.1).

Information

- The website Utdanning.no ought to highlight the opportunities available to Norwegian students to study abroad both as degree students and as exchange students. The work to ensure good communication with all Norwegian students must be carried out in collaboration with other relevant actors, such as the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) and the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånkassen).

Digital solutions for administration of student mobility

- The Government will work to simplify the application and approval processes related to student mobility for students and institutions.

Responsibility for Norwegian students abroad in the event of unforeseen incidents

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to assess and take into account the security risks of sending Norwegian students abroad on a case-by-case basis.
- The institutions have a clear responsibility to inform and advise the students about both the opportunities and the limitations in advance of their trip abroad, and to make clear the students' own responsibility.

Digital international cooperation and exchanges without physical mobility

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to incorporate an international dimension adapted to the individual programme in all study programmes, and that they also facilitate internationalisation for students who do not go abroad for a study or training period. The Government expects the higher education institutions to consider how they can accommodate virtual forms of international cooperation in their study programmes.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 deals with the Government's policy towards inbound exchange students, i.e. international students who are taking part of their degree at a Norwegian institution.

The Government's conclusions and measures

- The Government wants Norwegian higher education institutions to continue to work systematically to attract more international exchange students, both through their cooperation agreements with overseas universities and through programmes such as Erasmus+ (if participation in the period 2021–2027), Nordplus, UTFORSK and the quality programmes of the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku).
- The Government will consider whether Diku ought to be given a more clearly defined role in coordinating and managing information for inbound exchange students to make the information better and more accessible to these students. In connection with this, it may also be appropriate to commission the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and

Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) to act as an adviser on recruitment measures aimed at this group.

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to become better at tapping into the potential that international students represent as a resource to add an international dimension at Norwegian universities and university colleges. Among other things, the institutions ought to pave the way for better interaction between Norwegian and international students.
- The Government will request the student welfare organisations to facilitate more flexible rental contracts for student accommodation in order to make better use of the resources for outbound and inbound exchange students. In this context, the possibility of allowing Norwegian students who are on a learning period abroad to sublet their student accommodation ought to be considered, as this would also make the accommodation situation for inbound exchange students easier.
- The Government will request the institutions and the student welfare organisations to calculate the costs of student accommodation being left empty in some semesters as a result of visiting exchange students leaving, and would encourage the institutions and the student welfare organisations to establish agreements governing this.
- The Government expects the higher education institutions to continue their work to offer a sufficient number of educational opportunities in English to be able to attract international students.
- The Government expects an appropriate balance to be achieved between the proportion of courses taught in English and Norwegian respectively, and that the institutions clarify well before the start of the semester which courses are taught in English and which are taught in Norwegian.
- The Government expects the higher education institutions to be aware of their responsibility to maintain and further develop Norwegian as an academic and technical-vocational language.
- In connection with their cooperation with foreign institutions on periods of practical training abroad, the Government wants the institutions to also offer supervised professional training for international students in Norway, as far as is possible. Key employer and industry partners must assist in facilitating this.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 addresses the Government's policy for the European Commission's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe (Erasmus+).

The Government's conclusions and measures:

- The Government proposes that Norway participate in the EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport (Erasmus+) in the period 2021–2027, but will not make a final decision until the EU's long-term financial framework has been adopted.
- In the event of a final decision to participate in Erasmus+ from 2021, the Government will present a proposition to the Storting on participation in Erasmus+ with a view to incorporation into the EEA Agreement no later than July 2021. The Government will return to the budgetary implications in the annual national budgets.
- In the event of a final decision to participate in Erasmus+ from 2021, the Government will assess the need for increased administrative funding for the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) and the Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) in order to manage the increased budget and level of activity related to Erasmus+ in future national budgets.
- In the event of a final decision to participate in Erasmus+ from 2021, the Government will assess the need for any stimulation funds to increase participation in Erasmus+ and the need for supplementary funds to increase the impact of Norway's participation in the programme in future national budgets.
- In the event of a final decision to participate in Erasmus+ from 2021, the Government will develop a new strategy for the entire programme period 2021–2027, based on the adopted programme.
- Assuming Norway decides to participate in these programmes in the future, the Government expects a greater degree of synergies between the various mobility programmes and other international programmes such as Horizon Europe, Nordplus, educational programmes funded by the EEA and Norway Grants, NOTED, UTFORSK and INTPART.
- In the event of a final decision that Norway will participate in Erasmus+, the Government expects good participation by the universities,

university colleges and other relevant stakeholders.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 deals with international degree students who come to Norway.

The Government's conclusions and measures:

- The Government wants the institutions to strengthen their work to create an international learning environment with systems to ensure the best possible interaction between Norwegian and international students in both academic and extracurricular contexts.
- The Government wants a clearer, more strategic national policy indicating which international degree students Norway should target and will therefore create a working group that will consider a more deliberate policy towards international degree students at Norwegian institutions. This policy should build on overarching policies and frameworks regarding education and research, trade and industry, immigration, international development and national security. The development of this kind of policy must take national needs for skills and competencies into consideration and involve non-academic actors, such as the Ministry of Industry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the employer and employee organisations. The report will build on the overall national priorities specified in the long-term plan for research and education (cf. white paper Report no. 4 to the Storting (2018–2019)) and the *Strategy for Export and Internationalisation* (cf. the Ministry of Industry and Fisheries 2017).
- The Government wants greater focus in the work to attract students on the opportunity to apply for a job or start up a business for one year in Norway after completing a degree. The Government encourages the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) and the higher education institutions to inform international degree students about this opportunity.
- The Government wants a greater proportion of the full-degree students who come to Norway to come from the EU and EFTA countries and

from Norway's priority partner countries outside Europe. Furthermore, the higher education institutions should use the opportunities inherent in cooperation programmes with the Global South in order to strengthen mobility and cooperation with developing countries in the Global South at master's degree level.

- The Government will consider conducting a socioeconomic analysis of the impact of international degree students on the Norwegian economy, employment and society, both during and after their studies. The analysis will also include the impact of international students on Norwegian higher education, including the role they play in internationalisation at home. It is also natural to consider whether this kind of an analysis should be done on a regular basis and also include international PhD students.
- The Government wants the work to set up a joint system for admission of international students to master's degree programmes to start as soon as possible.
- The Government wants to establish a working group consisting of the Ministry of Education and Research (secretariat), other relevant ministries, and national stakeholders such as the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), the Research Council of Norway (RCN), and Innovation Norway, in addition to the institutions. The working group will be responsible for proposing overarching objectives and priorities for the promotion of Norway as a knowledge nation abroad, in line with the relevant overall policy objectives.
- The Government will assess the pertinence of establishing a national alumni network for international students. This will involve, among other things, mapping the institutions' existing alumni work and assessing whether establishment of a national network can strengthen the work of profiling Norway as a knowledge nation and the work of establishing opportunities for traineeships and work placement abroad.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 deals with Norwegian students who take a full degree at an overseas higher education institution.

The Government's conclusions and measures:

- The Government finds that the funding from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund

(Lånekassen) for Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad ought to be used in a more strategic way. This applies especially in respect of the quality of the universities the students choose, which countries the universities are located, and the cost level of the universities.

- The Government wants to make changes to the regulations governing the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) in order to increase student mobility to Norway's priority partner countries, and will return to the budgetary implications in the work on the annual national budgets.
- The Government wants more Norwegian full-degree students to choose to study in Norway's priority partner countries for cooperation on higher education and research.
- The Government wants more full-degree students to choose countries with lower tuition costs, to limit the level of debt among these students.
- The Government will consider reviewing the educational support schemes for students abroad with a view to making them more uniform and transparent. Educational support ought to be designed such that it ensures that more students choose studies in Norway's priority partner countries in the field of education, and in this context, it will also be relevant to review the grant for language courses for studying abroad.
- The Government will look at the correlation between the information needs and the current available information regarding the debt consequences related to the choice of place of study, and about the actual level of support (grant-loan ratio) when applying for support. Possible information measures that address any mismatch will then be assessed.
- The Government will map out the scope of support for students at "for-profit" institutions and look at the possibility of introducing new limits in the scheme that allows Norwegian full-degree students studying at such institutions abroad to receive support for tuition fees.
- The Government finds that the educational support in Norway is very good for Norwegian students, assessed both in its own right and measured against the support available to students in comparable countries. Educational support is also an effective tool to implement Norway's chosen policies, such as increased international mobility among Norwegian students, better foreign language skills, intercul-

tural competence, or in-depth knowledge about specific countries. It is also designed to help Norwegian students receive a high-quality, relevant education.

- The Government wants more students to choose study countries and study destinations with lower tuition costs, to reduce the level of debt among full-degree students. It is a known challenge that students who take a full degree at foreign institutions that charge high tuition fees end up with large debts after graduation.
- Students must be aware of their responsibilities when choosing a place of study. When choosing where to study, students must take into account factors such as quality, suitability and relevance, but it is equally important that they also take the level of cost of the studies into account.
- The Government holds that the target figures for international student mobility ought to include all study programmes culminating in a degree, and that students who take a full degree abroad ought also to be included in the calculation of the mobility rate.
- The Government will not introduce separate targets for the number and/or proportion of Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad in this white paper. However, the Government will ensure that going forward the statistics will consistently also include Norwegian full-degree students abroad, so that they are included in the results used to assess the extent to which we have reached the “Bologna target” and the target set in the Quality Report.
- The Government will continue the working group for coordinated information for Norwegian students abroad and will expand the group’s mandate so that the group also comprises representatives from the management level (i.e. the decision-making level).

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 deals with regulations and challenges linked to recognition of overseas education.

The Government’s conclusions and measures:

- The Government holds that although the regulations for recognition of higher education from other countries are clear and easy to apply, the regulations are not always practised in accordance with the intentions behind the regulations or the wording of the legal provisions. In connection with the work on a new

Universities and University Colleges Act, the Government will therefore emphasise Norway’s commitments under the Lisbon Recognition Convention in terms of recognition of foreign education qualifications, and will consider amending the relevant provision in the Universities and University Colleges Act to ensure that the principle of the Convention that foreign education shall be approved unless there are “substantial differences” is incorporated in Norwegian law. This will clarify the legislation and the rules that the institutions must follow when assessing whether higher education qualifications from another country can be approved and recognised.

- The Government stresses the importance of transparency and collaboration in the sector in respect of recognition of foreign education qualifications, and the goal that this will lead to more equal treatment of applications for recognition and an increase in competence in this area in the higher education sector.
- The Government will ensure that better information about recognition of foreign education qualifications is provided via the websites of the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), Altinn and the Directorate of Health. This applies to information about both recognition of foreign education and information about recognition of professional qualifications (authorisation).
- The Government encourages the higher education institutions to base their assessments of foreign education on the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, also when assessing education from countries that are not party to the Convention.
- The Government will investigate the possibility of further simplifying the system for recognition of professional qualifications for professions with few applications.
- The Government will initiate a pilot project to provide students with greater predictability in terms of information about the requirements that the Directorate of Health attaches greatest importance to when recognising professional qualifications from abroad.
- The Government will also look into how professions are regulated, which professions are currently regulated, and which professions ought to continue to be regulated. This is also an element in the implementation of the obligations that ensue from the EU Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications.

- The Government will consider how Norway can best contribute to the global implementation of the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education.
- In 2021, the Government will continue its support of the Council of Europe’s European Qualifications Passports for Refugees and UNESCO’s Global Qualifications Passports for Refugees.

2 Historical frameworks and guidelines for international student mobility

2.1 Political frameworks

2.1.1 The Bologna Process

The Bologna Process is an all-European process encompassing 48 European countries, the European Commission and all the central higher education organisations in Europe. The process was neither initiated by nor is led by the EU, but all the EU member states are participating, and the European Commission is a key member that contributes both in terms of content and financially. Through joint decisions, the member states are working to reform their higher education systems to make it easier for staff and students to move between European higher education institutions. The goal is not a single, common education policy for all countries, but rather to make it easier to compare the different national systems. The decisions that the ministers make at ministerial meetings, and which are enshrined in communiqués, are considered binding on each country and for the individual minister to follow up. One outcome of the Bologna process was the establishment of the *European Higher Education Area* (EHEA) by the European ministers at the ministerial meeting in 2010, as an area with comparable higher education systems with the aim, among others, of facilitating student and staff mobility across borders.

Increased student and staff mobility has been a key goal of the Bologna Process from the outset, and all the communiqués from ministerial meetings have included requirements and targets for the work on increasing student mobility. It has, among other things, been agreed that mobility should be encouraged and promoted in study programmes at all three levels of higher education (first degree, second degree and doctoral), and that the institutions should make better use of mobility windows, joint degrees and joint study programmes. It must be possible for students to take their educational grants and loans across national borders, the recognition systems are to be improved, and particular attention should be

paid to mobility in teacher education. The introduction of a comparable degree structure with three levels: usually a three-year bachelor's degree, a two-year master's degree and a three-year doctoral degree, has been essential to facilitate and ultimately increase student mobility.¹ A comparable degree structure makes it easier to understand both the level and the content of qualifications from a foreign educational institution.

The introduction of a system of credits, primarily the *European Credit Transfer System* (ECTS), has made it easier to compare education from different European countries, greatly simplifying the recognition process. This has, in turn, made it easier for students in higher education to move between countries. The introduction of the *European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education* and the concurrent commitment that all EHEA countries should develop and implement national qualification frameworks has also been an important step towards easier recognition of qualifications and thus student mobility.

The students' ability and right to take their national educational grants and loans across borders to study abroad ("portability") has been considered another key instrument for increasing student mobility. This has been stated as a commitment in the communiqués from the Bologna Process since the outset. There is a large degree of variance within the EHEA in terms of the portability of student grants and loans, and many of the countries have restrictions. Norwegian student funding is very good by European standards, with few restrictions.²

Another central element in the Bologna Process has been the development of the international cooperation on quality assurance of higher education, and the subsequent requirements to establish national systems for quality assurance. Particularly important was the adoption of *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) at the

¹ European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2018).

² European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2018), chapter 7.

Ministerial Meeting held in Bergen in 2005.³ The development of cooperation regarding quality assurance has had a major impact on the different countries' confidence that the education in other countries is of a sufficiently high standard. The fact that institutions can be sure of the quality of the study programmes at their partner institutions is essential for institutional cooperation, which is in turn an important prerequisite for increased student mobility.

Although the countries in the Bologna Process have agreed to introduce a number of structures for the EHEA, in part to facilitate student mobility, it is a challenge that not all the countries have introduced nationally what have been agreed on at the European level. This entails a risk of not having a real European Higher Education Area where the degree systems are compatible and comparable, where education is adequately quality assured, and where education is recognised across national borders. This, in turn, can be an obstacle to student mobility. As an example, it can be mentioned that although it has been agreed to introduce a common degree structure in the EHEA with three main levels, it remains a problem in terms of mobility that almost all the countries have integrated master's level degree programmes in disciplines such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, architecture and veterinary science, and to a lesser extent also in engineering, law, theology and teacher education. These integrated programmes make it virtually impossible for students to take their bachelor's degree in one country and the master's degree in another, since the education is not divided into two separate degree cycles. This prevents student mobility between the educational levels. Norway is one of the countries with the highest number of these kinds of integrated master's degrees, and it is important to be aware of the obstacles this entails for degree mobility in these disciplines.

In order to intensify the work on student mobility, in 2009 the ministers set a target that by 2020, at least 20 per cent of graduates in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad.

In 2012, the EHEA ministers adopted *Mobility for better learning*, a dedicated strategy for mobility in the European Higher Education Area towards 2020.⁴ Here, the countries committed to implement various measures related to, among other things, balanced mobility (balance in the

number of inbound and outbound students, and in this context in particular geographical balance in student flows in Europe), implementation of national mobility strategies, improved information, etc.

The decisions in the various communiqués from the Bologna Process and the measures in the mobility strategy have been and continue to act as a guideline for Norway's work on student mobility.

2.1.2 European cooperation

The EU is the main arena for international cooperation for Norway's higher education institutions. Participating in this arena is an important priority for the Government, and large sums are invested each year in measures to facilitate student exchanges, institutional cooperation, internationalisation and research cooperation. European cooperation in higher education is increasing and evolving. This work is fundamental to the efforts to further strengthen the quality, relevance and attractiveness of the Norwegian education system.

Participation in the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014–2020 (Erasmus+) is one of the main instruments for achieving Norway's political goals in this area and is thus also an important part of Norway's education policy.⁵ Since the early 1990s, approximately 30,000 Norwegian students have been on an international exchange through the Erasmus programme. Participation in this programme has also provided Norwegian higher education institutions with access to an extensive network of European partners. Erasmus+ is discussed further in chapter 6.

The Lisbon Process from March 2000 marked the first time that education was fully included as a fundamental element in policy development at the European level. The new governance instrument at the EU level was called the *open method of coordination* (OMC). The current overarching strategic framework for the OMC process in the area of education is *Education and Training 2020*. Norway's education cooperation has therefore increased considerably in both scope and importance since 2000, although the sector remains exclusively a matter of national competence. Norway participates in this cooperation on the basis of the EEA Agreement, and the funding is

³ ESG (2015).

⁴ The Bologna Process (2012b).

⁵ Report no. 5 to the Storting (2012–2013) *The EEA Agreement and Norway's other agreements with the EU*.

taken from the programme funds for EU educational programmes.

In this strategic framework, in the same way as in the Bologna Process, a *benchmark* has been set that by 2020 at least 20 per cent of higher education graduates in the EU should have had a period of higher education-related study or training (including work placements) abroad. At the last report, the average for the EU indicated that only 11.6 per cent of the students who graduated in 2017 had participated in a learning period abroad.⁶ Some 3.6 per cent took a full degree in another country, while 8 per cent had a study or training period abroad. In 2018, the figure for Norway was about 16 per cent, only including students who had a study or training period abroad, i.e. excluding students who took a full degree abroad. Norway is thus well above the average for the EU countries. The EU countries with the highest rates were Luxembourg (80.5 per cent), Cyprus (36.9 per cent) and the Netherlands (24.9 per cent).

Education is a good example of an area where EU involvement is being developed both in depth and breadth. Over the past twenty years, the EU has increasingly developed policies by establishing targets and benchmarks, measuring performance, and recommending measures. This is a process in which countries participate voluntarily, and they are free to choose whether to follow the recommendations or not. Nevertheless, it has led to the EU having more opportunities to set the agenda and steer developments.

The EU has decided to establish a *European Education Area* by 2025. The main objectives of the European Education Area include that spending time abroad to study and learn should become the norm, school and higher education qualifications should be recognised across the EU, and knowing two foreign languages in addition to one's mother tongue should be standard.

On 30 September 2020, the European Commission presented the report *Achieving the European Education Area by 2025* on the European Education Area.⁷ The report deals with the entire field of education and highlights six dimensions: quality of education and training, inclusion and gender equality, green and digital transitions, teachers and trainers, higher education, and the geopolitical dimension. The report also includes a revised strategic framework for European cooperation on education, with updated objectives.

⁶ European Commission (2019a).

⁷ European Commission (2020).

Erasmus+ is expected to play a key role in the work to achieve these political goals, with a strengthened Erasmus programme as one of the main measures. The European Education Area also has implications for the single market and the EEA, since its main aim is recognition of qualifications and free movement of workers.

2.1.3 The 2003 Quality Reform

In 2001, the Government at the time presented the Quality Reform white paper (Report no. 27 to the Storting (2000–2001) *Do your duty – claim your right. Quality reform of higher education*). Through the Quality Reform, Norway implemented the requirements of the Bologna Process, and student mobility and internationalisation were given higher priority.

The Quality Reform entailed major structural changes to the higher education system in Norway. A new degree structure was introduced with three-year bachelor's degrees and two-year master's degrees, albeit with a few exceptions.⁸ At the same time, requirements regarding quality assurance systems were introduced, and an independent quality assurance body was established. The reform also entailed introduction of a new funding system with a performance-based component, a new common national grading scale running from A to F, a new system of credits (using, in Norwegian, "*studiepoeng*" instead of "*vektall*"), greater academic and administrative freedom for the institutions, and new forms of learning and teaching.

Internationalisation was a central topic of the white paper in which the reform was presented (Report no. 27 to the Storting (2000–2001)), and increased internationalisation in Norwegian universities and university colleges was emphasised. Norwegian higher education institutions were expected to participate more in international programmes and enter into international agreements at the institutional level.⁹ The importance of facilitating student mobility was underlined in the requirement "that all higher education institutions must be able to offer students who so wish a study period abroad as part of a degree programme."¹⁰ The white paper also stressed the importance of developing educational opportunities in English,

⁸ Report no. 11 to the Storting (2001–2002) *The Quality Reform. On assessing some exceptions to the new degree structure in higher education*.

⁹ Report no. 27 to the Storting (2000–2001) *Do your duty – claim your right. Quality reform of higher education*, p. 41-42.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

and that such courses ought also to be available to international students.

As a result of higher priority for internationalisation, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU)¹¹ was established on 1 January 2004, among other things to assist the institutions in their international work and to promote internationalisation and mobility in higher education. In addition, a performance indicator for internationalisation was introduced in the new funding system. With a view to increasing student mobility, the institutions received funding, according to the performance-based funding system, for each student who went overseas on an exchange stay of at least three months' duration through cooperation agreements, and correspondingly, also for inbound students.

2.1.4 The 2009 white paper on internationalisation

In 2009, the Government at the time presented a white paper on internationalisation (Report no. 14 to the Storting (2008–2009) *Internationalisation of education in Norway*).¹² This white paper emphasised student mobility as an important part of the academic cooperation at the institutional level, with closer links between research and higher education, highlighting it as the desired form for future international cooperation for Norwegian higher education institutions. The internationalisation process was to be linked to the institutions' strategic development. As a result, the institutions were to give greater priority to international cooperation that involved student exchanges, as opposed to attracting full-degree students from abroad.

At the same time, the measures proposed in the white paper entailed a focus on the quality of education, in terms of both study periods abroad and the education offered at Norwegian higher education institutions. The Government at that time set requirements that Norwegian universities and university colleges must work on becoming more attractive to international students and institutions, and that Norwegian students had to select high-quality overseas institutions to a greater extent. The Government therefore modified the educational support for tuition fees so that

students were more motivated to choose high-quality studies.

The main ambition of the white paper was to increase the proportion of Norwegian exchange students and degree students abroad. Staff mobility was also to be increased. In order to enable Norwegian students to study at the best institutions abroad, additional grants were offered for studies at selected institutions. These institutions were listed on the so-called "additional grant list", which was managed by the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen).

Another ambition presented in the white paper was that all pupils and students should encounter international perspectives, and that there should be a greater focus on such perspectives. At the same time, better information and advice was to be given on the opportunities for study periods abroad. Attention was drawn to the fact that internationalisation of education is also a matter of internationalisation at home.

2.2 Multilateral and bilateral initiatives

2.2.1 Nordic cooperation

Integration and mobility have been key objectives in the Nordic cooperation for many years, including in the Nordic Council of Ministers. *The Nordic Council of Ministers' action plan for mobility 2019–2021* sets targets for Nordic cooperation related to mobility.

The action plan's goals for the field of education are:

- to create better conditions for recognition of education and professional qualifications
- to increase knowledge of the Nordic region and offer concrete forms of mobility, language learning and cultural exchanges
- to strengthen mutual understanding of the neighbouring Nordic languages and knowledge of the Nordic region's societal languages
- to inform people living in the Nordic region and institutions about existing opportunities for mobility

Statistics on the number of Nordic students who took a full degree in another Nordic country between 2013 and 2017 show that Norwegian students made greater use of the offer than students from the other Nordic countries. Denmark is by far the most attractive destination for Norwegian students, with Sweden as a clear number two. In the period, the number of Norwegian full-degree students in other Nordic countries has decreased

¹¹ Now the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku).

¹² Report no. 14 to the Storting (2008–2009) *Internationalisation of education in Norway*.

slightly, from around 3,500 to about 3,200. In total, approximately 9,200 Nordic students, study in another Nordic country each year.¹³

Several of the Nordic Council of Ministers' mobility programmes, such as *Nordplus* and *Nordic Master*, enable Nordic citizens to spend a period of time in another Nordic country.

For example, 60 per cent of the funds in the *Nordplus Higher Education* sub-programme are earmarked for mobility, in addition to support for mobility in some of the other projects. In this sub-programme, it is primarily stable institutional networks that apply for funding for mobility activities and development projects for new students and academic staff. It is an important goal that Nordplus and Erasmus+ are compatible. *Nordplus Higher Education* has focused on so-called "express mobility" – shorter study or training periods abroad lasting from one week to one month. At the same time, the Nordic Council of Ministers advises the universities to apply for Erasmus+ for longer study periods abroad.

Through its two-year master's programme, *Nordic Master* provides opportunities for a learning period abroad for students and academic staff. In 2018, there were 14 active programmes that received students, and four programmes that were still under development. Approximately 300 students had completed the programmes and taken final examinations, and around 1,000 students were enrolled on courses. At least three Nordic universities are establishing joint master's programmes under the *Nordic Master* umbrella. This allows students to create an individual study programme, choosing the best that each university has to offer.

2.2.2 Cooperation with priority partner countries

International student mobility is also promoted through Norway's cooperation on higher education and research with selected priority partner countries within and outside of Europe. In 2019, the following eleven countries had status as priority partners for cooperation on education and research, based on bilateral agreements, action plans and strategies at governmental level: Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Brazil, India, Japan, China, Russia and South Africa. Although the way in which cooperation is organised varies from country to country, the priorities and instruments all rest on the

same underlying principles, primarily: quality, relevance, reciprocity and the building of long-term academic partnerships.

The Government holds that a better system of educational support for language learning will help encourage more people to choose education in languages other than English. Having more students studying in non-anglophone countries will ultimately serve as an instrument to strengthen Norway's competitiveness in a globalised world. The consultation responses in connection with the work on the *Panorama strategy*¹⁴ indicated that better support for language courses was considered essential for Norway to achieve increased student mobility to these countries. One of the measures that the Ministry of Education and Research has implemented to motivate more students to study abroad in languages other than English is increased opportunities to receive educational support to take language courses.

2.2.2.1 Germany

The Government's *Germany strategy* states that Germany is Norway's most important partner in Europe and that the Government "will stimulate increased interest in the German language and Germany in schools and among students". It is also stated that "Germany plays an important role in value creation in Norway, making increased knowledge about German society, language and culture important for trade and industry".¹⁵ It is therefore a goal that more Norwegian students take all or part of their education in Germany.

The number of Norwegian students who have chosen to take all or part of their education at a German higher education institution has changed dramatically in the last 25 years. From there being about 1,000 degree students per year in the mid-1990s, this figure had more than halved by 2010, despite then counting both degree students as well as exchange students. The number has increased again slightly in recent years, reaching 611 students in the peak year of 2016. Within Erasmus+, Norwegian institutions have the most exchange partnerships with German institutions. The number of Norwegian students with a study period in Germany is still low, and there are few Norwegian students who choose to study German as a subject in higher education.

At the same time, the number of inbound students visiting Norwegian institutions from

¹³ Nordic Council of Ministers (2018).

¹⁴ Ministry of Education and Research (2015).

¹⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019).

Germany is high and has risen in recent years. The balance between inbound and outbound students is particularly skewed in our collaboration with Germany, compared with other major European countries.

Since autumn 2015, the Ministry has established an action plan for its cooperation with Germany, implementing several new measures. One of these measures is extended support for language courses through the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen). The EU programmes for education and research are particularly important arenas for this bilateral cooperation.¹⁶

2.2.2.2 France

Norway's bilateral research and education cooperation with France is diverse and has evolved over a long period of time. The first Norwegian–French agreement, the 1918 school agreement with Rouen, is one of the oldest bilateral internationalisation measures in the sector and is probably Norway's first bilateral agreement on education. A new bilateral framework agreement for education, research, innovation and cultural cooperation was signed in autumn 2018.

The figures on higher education mobility between Norway and France show an increase in the number of French students in Norway in recent years, but a decrease in the number of Norwegian students in France. The EU programmes for education and research are particularly important arenas in Norway's bilateral cooperation with France. Within Erasmus+, the latest figures reveal a noticeable increase in the number of inbound students coming to Norway from France, while the number of outbound students has remained stable. The overall figures are significantly lower than for English-speaking countries, but they are on par with the figures for Germany. In other words, there are some 500–600 Norwegian students either doing a full degree or a study or training period abroad in France each year.

Over the years, a number of programmes have been developed to promote education cooperation between France and Norway. These schemes are primarily intended to get more Norwegian pupils and students to choose France as a country of study and to increase competencies in French. Most are small, tailor-made schemes to enable young Norwegians to study in France without the

need for advanced-level French competency at the outset. In this respect, the schemes are largely aimed at young people who would otherwise probably have chosen to study in an English-speaking country. Despite the small numbers of Norwegian students involved, the schemes help provide valuable foreign language skills and cultural expertise for Norwegian employers. Within higher education, the most important programmes are the adapted full-degree programmes for Norwegians in Toulouse, NORGINSA (engineering), and OFNEC (Office of Franco-Norwegian Exchanges and Cooperation) at Université de Caen. Norwegian academic communities at French universities also contribute to a Norwegian presence in the field of education. They are involved in translating Norwegian literature into French and contribute generally to knowledge of Norwegian culture and society in France. Norwegian is currently taught at four universities in France: Paris, Caen, Strasbourg and Lille.

2.2.2.3 North America

The United States and Canada have always been among Norway's main partners in both higher education and research. In 2007, with a view to ensuring a strategic approach to cooperation with the USA and Canada within higher education and increasing student mobility to North America, the Ministry of Education and Research published the *Ministry of Education and Research's North America Strategy for Higher Education Cooperation 2008–2011*.¹⁷ This was followed by a strategy for increased cooperation on higher education with North America for the period 2012–2015.¹⁸ Together, these strategies focused on cooperation at governmental level, the establishment of networking arenas, forging closer links between education and research, the training and the exchange of researchers and technical experts, and increased mobility for staff and students. No new strategy has been established since the last strategy expired in 2015, but several of the measures from the previous strategies still exist. This includes the *Partnership Programme for North America*, which is administered by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku). The purpose of this programme is to increase cooperation with the USA and Canada and get more Norwegian students to study in these countries by

¹⁶ Ministry of Education and Research (2017).

¹⁷ Ministry of Education and Research (2007).

¹⁸ Ministry of Education and Research (2011).

encouraging partnerships between higher education institutions. Since its inception in 2008, the programme has allocated NOK 88 million to 170 different projects that promote cooperation with these two countries. Of this sum, approximately NOK 54 million has been awarded to cooperation between institutions in Norway and the USA.

The USA is one of the most popular destination countries among Norwegian students, both exchange students and students who take a full degree abroad. In the academic year 2019–2020, there were a total of 2,593 Norwegian students in the USA. Of these, a clear majority were enrolled in full degree programmes in the USA (1,751 students), compared with 842 who were on a study or training period abroad. The number of Norwegian degree students in the USA has risen sharply in the past ten years, and has more than doubled since the 2007–2008 academic year. However, there has been a slight decrease in recent years. The trend in the number of exchange students in the USA has followed the same pattern as for full-degree students, with a sharp rise between 2012 and 2015, but here too the number has decreased slightly in recent years. Canada is not as popular as a study destination for Norwegian students. There were 137 full-degree students and 164 exchange students in 2019–2020.

In general, Norwegian students have good opportunities to get funding to study in the USA and Canada, both through the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) and through programmes administered by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku). There is also the Norway–America Association (NORAM) and the *Fulbright Program* for Norwegian students who want to study in the USA. The *Fulbright Program* is a scholarship programme that gives Norwegian students and researchers the opportunity to go on an exchange to the USA – and vice versa. The programme is administered and partly financed by the US State Department.

The number of inbound students from the USA to Norway is significantly lower than the number of Norwegian students in the USA. In 2019, there were 413 American full-degree students enrolled in Norway. However, this group has grown steadily over the past ten years. The number of exchange students is lower, amounting to 258 students in 2019. The figures for Canada are lower, with 138 enrolled full-degree students and 162 exchange students in 2019, but here too there has been a solid increase in recent years.

Norway wants to continue to strengthen the cooperation within higher education and research with both the USA and Canada, at both the institutional and the governmental level.

2.2.2.4 South America, Asia, Africa

A growing proportion of the world's knowledge production is taking place outside Europe and North America. Cooperation with countries on other continents will therefore be increasingly important to further develop the Norwegian knowledge society. At the same time, large geographical distances, language, cultural differences and unfamiliar systems make it particularly challenging for Norwegian institutions to establish and further develop cooperation with these countries. It was against this backdrop that the Government presented *Panorama – Strategy for cooperation on higher education and research with Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia and South Africa (2016–2020)* in 2015. The Panorama strategy aims to “lay the foundation for more integrated, long-term cooperation with these six countries on higher education and research, with an eye to promoting more high-quality collaboration in areas that are of particular interest to Norway.”¹⁹ In other words, the goal is not simply *more* cooperation, but rather *better*, more targeted cooperation that forges ties between partnerships on higher education and research, promotes the involvement of non-academic partners, contributes to good student mobility, and underpins Norway's collaboration in multilateral arenas (such as EU programmes).

In the Panorama strategy, the Government states that it wants more Norwegian students to choose to study in Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia and South Africa, with a particular focus on student exchanges that are part of a broader institutional partnership. The point of departure is that strategic partnerships at the institutional level facilitate reciprocal mobility within a broader academic cooperation with appropriate integration of higher education, research and innovation. In line with this, the main financial measures related to the strategy – the partnership programmes UTFORSK and INTPART (*International Partnerships for Excellent Education and Research*) – have been designed to promote the development of long-term partnerships between institutions and academic environments in Norway and the six partner countries. These

¹⁹ Ministry of Education and Research (2015).

Box 2.1 UTFORSK

UTFORSK is administered by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) and is one of the Ministry of Education and Research's two main instruments in the Panorama strategy. The purpose of the programme is to help establish and strengthen long-term institutional partnerships within higher education, with a focus on better integration between research and education, increased cooperation with employers and industry, and increased student mobility. In the period 2016–2018, NOK 76.3 million has been allocated across 80 cooperation projects with the six Panorama countries (Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia and South Africa). A review of the projects funded via the first calls from June 2016 reveals the following:

- UTFORSK contributes to the establishment of lasting institutional partnerships between Norway and the priority partner countries.
- The partnerships contribute to improved quality in education through the institutions jointly developing courses and syllabuses.

- UTFORSK is a flexible instrument that allows different methods and forms of teaching to be tested, paving the way for innovation and creativity in teaching.
- The activities in the projects are characterised by close collaboration between students and researchers.
- The student mobility activities in the projects are closely related to ongoing research activities and involve close collaboration between students and researchers.
- Student mobility under UTFORSK is generally shorter than three months.
- The educational activities are closely linked to research activities and promote student-active research.
- Close contact with non-academic partners in educational activities helps make the education more relevant. Almost 70 per cent of the projects include partners from public and/or private enterprises.
- The partnerships initially established under UTFORSK are often continued and expanded using other sources of funding.

cooperation programmes in turn pave the way for both student and staff mobility. For students who take their entire education abroad, the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånkassen) can provide support for the first, and in some cases second, year of a bachelor's degree. This applies even if the year cannot be given general recognition and accreditation in ECTS credits by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT). It is a condition that the education can be given general recognition by NOKUT as equivalent to accredited Norwegian education at bachelor's level. In addition to this, educational support for language learning through the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånkassen) for students in non-anglophone countries is an important measure in the strategy to promote student mobility to China, Russia, Japan and Brazil.

Reviews of UTFORSK and INTPART show that the programmes are actively used by Norwegian academic environments and that they serve

to underpin several of the overarching priorities in the Panorama strategy (see box). As regards the goal of getting more Norwegian students to choose to study in Brazil, China, India, Japan, Russia and South Africa, preliminary reviews show that it is primarily short mobility stays that have increased since the strategy was initiated. However, the figures vary from country to country.

The findings of an evaluation of the Panorama strategy, which was started in 2019, were published in spring 2020. As a result of the positive evaluation, the Government has decided to renew the Panorama strategy for the period 2021–2027. Today's six priority partner countries will continue, and South Korea has been added as a new priority partner country. In addition, the two priority partner countries in North America have now been incorporated under this strategy. The main priorities and principles for cooperation remain unchanged.

Box 2.2 INTPART

The *Programme for International Partnerships for Excellent Education and Research* (INTPART) was established in 2015 as a completely new approach to internationalising Norwegian academic environments. Administered jointly by the Research Council of Norway (RCN) and the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), the programme is intended to help develop long-term institutional partnerships across the defined thematic priorities. The overarching objective for INTPART is to build world-class academic environments in Norway through international partnerships that integrate education, research and innovation, while also encouraging involvement of the public and private sectors. INTPART is part of the Government's commitment to developing outstanding academic environments in Norway and is one of the two main measures in the Government's

Panorama strategy. The programme is aimed at Norway's eight priority partner countries outside Europe: Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa and the USA. In addition, an INTPART pilot project was established in 2017 targeting Germany and France. A review of INTPART from June 2019 indicates that the programme has yielded excellent results after four calls for applications (2015–2018). To date, 90 projects have received funding totalling NOK 365 million. Many of the projects also involve cooperation with researchers and institutions from third countries. More than half of the projects have commercial relevance and are also attractive to the business clusters. INTPART also contributes to extensive student mobility through direct and indirect involvement in international academic cooperation, with ties to trade and industry.

2.2.3 Cooperation with countries in the Global South

2.2.3.1 NORPART

The *Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global Academic Cooperation* (NORPART) is funded by both the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it is intended to achieve both higher education policy and development policy objectives. The overall goal of the programme is to enhance the quality of higher education in Norway and selected developing countries through long-term academic partnerships and reciprocal student mobility.

The programme has four main goals:

- strengthened partnerships for education and research between developing countries and Norway
- increased quality and internationalisation of academic programmes at participating institutions
- increased student mobility from developing countries to Norway, including mobility in connection with work placements
- increased student mobility from Norway to developing countries, including mobility in connection with work placements

NORPART facilitates cooperation with 39 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, therefore this is a slightly different group of countries to those covered by the Quota Scheme. The BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) are no longer included, as they are now covered by schemes under the Panorama strategy. Nor does NORPART include countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Most of these countries are covered by Diku's *Eurasia Programme*, through support schemes related to the EEA and Norway Grants, or through Erasmus+.

The countries included in NORPART are mainly countries that used to send students to Norway under the Norwegian Quota Scheme, plus a number of other countries with a history of or potential for academic cooperation with Norwegian institutions on higher education. Of these, two-thirds are so-called low-income countries, while the remainder are so-called middle-income countries.

A long-term perspective and flexibility were key principles in the work on developing the NORPART programme. Flexibility is important in order to meet the needs and exploit the opportunities at the higher education institutions in Norway and the partner countries. A long-term perspec-

tive ensures predictability, which is essential to build strong partnerships, enhance the quality of academic programmes, and develop structures that ensure the sustainability of projects, such as systems for mutual recognition of credits and development of joint courses and study programmes. These are prerequisites for high-quality student mobility between Norway and the partner countries.

Increased student mobility from developing countries to Norway is one of four objectives of the NORPART programme. Two of the other objectives – strengthened partnerships for education and research between developing countries and Norway, and increased quality and internationalisation of academic programmes at participating institutions – are equally important, as they have an impact for far more students than those who are given the opportunity to go to Norway for a study period.

In the national budget for 2020, the allocation to the NORPART programme was increased from NOK 40.3 million to NOK 54.7 million via the Ministry of Education and Research's budget. The programme was also allocated an additional NOK 15 million via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' budget. In connection with this strengthening of the NORPART programme, the Government proposes that the programme can also cover full degrees in Norway for students from the Global South, within certain criteria. At the same time, the programme must work to ensure that the students return to their home country after their studies in Norway. As part of the expansion of the NORPART and the follow-up of the Panorama strategy, South Africa was incorporated into NORPART from 2020.

2.3 Regulations and funding

2.3.1 National regulations and international conventions

Well-designed recognition systems, excellent practice of the regulations, and compliance with ratified conventions are essential in order for Norway to be able to recognise qualifications issued by foreign educational institutions and protect the interests of and make use of people with foreign qualifications in a way that benefits both the individual and society to the greatest possible degree. The framework for inbound and outbound student mobility follows from both national regulations and international conventions that Norway has entered into. This section provides a general

presentation of the regulations. There is also a more detailed account of the regulations and international obligations in chapter 9 *Recognition of overseas education*.

The Norwegian Universities and University Colleges Act²⁰ contains provisions on recognition of foreign higher education qualifications. Decisions on general recognition are made by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT),²¹ while recognition decisions requiring academic assessment are made by the individual universities and university colleges.²²

The system of general recognition of foreign higher education is primarily intended for persons who do not wish to study further in Norway, but who want an assessment of whether the foreign education can be regarded as equivalent to accredited Norwegian higher education in level and scope, so that it can be used in a non-regulated profession.

The system of specific recognition of foreign higher education is primarily intended for persons who wish to study further in Norway. Specific recognition is based on assessments of the individual applicant's education against a specific study programme (or in some cases several study programmes) offered at the Norwegian higher education institution that has received the application.

In addition to the systems for recognition of foreign education qualifications established on the basis of the Universities and University Colleges Act, there are also systems for recognition of qualifications for regulated professions. Regulated professions differ from non-regulated professions in that practitioners must have authorisation or recognition from the competent authority in order to be able to practise their profession. The system for recognition of professional qualifications (authorisation) differs from, and must be kept separate from, the system for recognition of foreign higher education as discussed above and in chapter 9, since it constitutes an approval of the *profession*, as opposed to the *education*. General or specific recognition of foreign education qualifications does not automatically entitle the individual to practise a profession regulated by law.

Recognition of a qualification from a foreign educational institution must also be in accordance

²⁰ Act no. 15 of 1 April 2005 relating to universities and university colleges.

²¹ Cf. section 3-4 of the Universities and University Colleges Act.

²² Cf. section 3-5 of the Universities and University Colleges Act.

with international agreements that Norway has entered into. The relevant international agreements in this context are the *Lisbon Recognition Convention*, which concerns the recognition of higher education qualifications in the European region, and the revised *Reykjavík Declaration*, which concerns mutual recognition of education taken in the Nordic countries.

2.3.2 The funding system for universities and university colleges

The funding system for universities and public and private university colleges encompasses the Ministry of Education and Research's allocations to the public institutions and grants to private institutions. Each institution receives a block grant made up of two components: a basic allocation and a performance-based funding component. The performance-based funding is intended to stimulate results in areas that are central to quality in education and research and is based on the individual institution's performance on eight quantitative indicators. The funding is based on the results the institutions achieve on eight quantitative indicators. One of these is the exchange indicator, which triggers funding based on the number of exchange students an institution has, in the form of a fixed rate per inbound and outbound exchange student. This indicator has an open budget framework, which means that each additional student entails an increase in the funding at a fixed rate, whereas fewer students will result in a reduction in funding. Performance-based funding is granted for mobility of at least three months' duration. In 2019, the institutions received NOK 10,300 per inbound and outbound exchange student (not including students with individual exchange agreements), while the rate for outbound Erasmus+ students was higher, at NOK 15,450 per student. The additional funding is awarded through the national budget two years after the results were achieved.

2.3.3 Educational support for students abroad

Facilitating studies abroad through public funding and central recognition systems is an important educational policy instrument. Educational support through the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) means that most people in Norway have the opportunity to study. The purpose of the educational support scheme is to help ensure equal opportunities for education, regard-

less of geographical location, age, gender, disability, and financial and/or social factors. The scheme shall also ensure that society and industry have access to the competencies they need, and that education takes place under satisfactory conditions that allow for effective studying.

The state and the individual share the cost of higher education. Students from Norway studying abroad are entitled to support to cover living expenses, in line with students studying in Norway. All students studying abroad may be entitled to support to cover living expenses, tuition fees and travel. The support is provided partly as a grant and partly as a loan. In the event of illness or childbirth, schemes exist where loan can be converted into a grant. Furthermore, there are special grants available for students with children and students with disabilities. There is a special recruitment grant for certain master's degree programmes in France and Germany.

Students who take a full degree abroad must study full-time in order to qualify for support. For these students, the loan is interest-free while they are studying. Students who study part-time in Norway are entitled to a period abroad while studying at the same percentage on the programme abroad as they did in Norway. In connection with a loan or grant for part-time education, interest accumulates on the debt from previous education.²³

Support is provided for education taken abroad. It is a condition that the education can be given general recognition by the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) as equivalent to accredited Norwegian education at bachelor's or master's level. For programmes at the doctoral level, it is a condition that the education can be given general recognition by NOKUT as equivalent to an accredited Norwegian PhD. Education in another Nordic country must normally be publicly accredited and be eligible for student support in the country of study. Educational support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) does not automatically provide authorisation to practise professions regulated by law in Norway.

Support can also be granted for study or training periods abroad that have been pre-approved in Norway by a university, a specialised university college or a university college. The education must be part of a bachelor's or master's degree. The grant-loan ratio is such that it favours partial

²³ See the reference list for links to the rules for support for education abroad.

studies and master's degree programmes, in the sense that students receive a higher grant share for these studies when funding is provided for tuition fees at an overseas institution.

The main criteria to qualify for funding from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) for degree education overseas are that the applicant has obtained a higher education entrance qualification, that they are a Norwegian citizen²⁴, that they have been admitted to a programme of education that qualifies them for support, and that they meet the conditions concerning connection to Norway.

For selected institutions of particularly high quality, students can receive an additional grant, if the tuition fees are higher than NOK 133,752 for the entire academic year (2019–2020). The Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) is responsible for the list of overseas institutions that qualify for a grant. The list is revised each year.

Norway's educational support is regarded as good in an international perspective, and in particular the support available to students who choose to study overseas, because it has few restrictions. The Norwegian scheme is discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

2.4 The situation in other countries

Most countries have taken steps to increase student mobility and have developed overarching strategies with defined objectives, targets and measures. However, most of these strategies seem to focus on inbound mobility. Unlike Norway, which does not have a clear strategy for inbound student mobility, most countries attach far greater importance to recruiting students from abroad, as opposed to sending their own students out into the world. This is the case in the Netherlands, Russia, the United Kingdom, Finland, the United States, Canada and France, among others.

Three factors seem to be pivotal in explaining why these countries attach greater importance to inbound student mobility than outbound. Firstly, the recruitment of outstanding international students can strengthen the quality of the higher education institution and make it more attractive internationally. Secondly, outstanding students will at a later date be able to help boost the country's economy and ability to innovate by providing

highly skilled labour. In this respect, several countries, including Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands, are focusing on ensuring that the rules on immigration, work permits, social security rights, etc. enable the recruitment of highly qualified skilled workers from abroad. Thirdly, international students contribute to the funding of the higher education in the host country. This is particularly relevant in countries where education is substantially funded by tuition fees, such as the United Kingdom. Tuition fees from international students can also be used to help subsidise domestic students. Japan wants to recruit a higher proportion of inbound students specifically to counterbalance the country's aging population.

Unlike most countries, but in line with Norway, Austria, by contrast, seems to attach greatest importance to outbound mobility, in addition to developing international networks and partnerships. Despite this, Austria has a large preponderance of inbound students. Austria has formulated clear targets for outbound mobility of both students and academic staff. The outcome that students and staff who spend time overseas will gain new perspectives and broader horizons is highlighted as an important underlying objective of the strategy. The main goal, however, is to strengthen Austria's standing as a leading nation in science, research and industry. The fact that higher education in Austria is not funded through tuition fees to any significant extent is probably part of the reason the country attaches greatest importance to outbound mobility.

The situation is changing in the two most populous countries in the world – India and China. A significant number of students from China and India have traditionally gone overseas to study at foreign universities, due to limited capacity in their own education systems, and little attention has been paid to inbound mobility. More recently, however, India has created an online portal for international students, *Study in India*, covering the 100 highest-ranked higher education institutions in the country. China is now welcoming a significant number of international students, in part through a major investment and development project called the *Belt and Road Initiative* (BRI). China has also introduced a more flexible admissions policy for international students. This suggests that India and China have begun to prioritise inbound mobility. Most of the inbound students come from neighbouring countries, or from countries China and India want closer relations with. At the same time, they are increasingly sending their own students to universities in Europe and North America.

²⁴ On certain conditions, support may also be provided for citizens from EEA or EFTA countries and their families.

3 Why student mobility?

Student mobility can have a wide range of positive effects, for the students as individuals, for society, and for the higher education sector. The outcomes of different types of study periods abroad will depend, among other things, on the length of the stay and how the study period is incorporated into the student's study programme.

When assessing impacts, the time dimension must also be taken into account: Some positive effects will be immediately apparent (for example, improved foreign language skills in the individual student), while others will not be manifest until much later, perhaps even many years later (for example, improved academic reputation for the institution, or socioeconomic gains). The element of time and the fact that other factors may have an impact make it difficult to pinpoint and measure the exact benefits of different types of student mobility, but a number of studies have been conducted that shed some light on these issues. Below, the key findings from Norwegian and international academic literature on international student mobility are presented.

3.1 Benefits for the students

There are three main types of benefits for students who have a study or training period abroad. The first are effects linked to the quality of the education itself, in the sense of academic learning outcomes and motivation. The second are effects linked to career relevance, i.e. whether the period spent abroad affects the students' job opportunities, career choices, earning potential, etc. The third are effects linked to general skills, personal development and general moral, social and cultural education, such as collaboration skills, foreign language skills, independence, creativity and cultural awareness. The latter category of benefits is more a result of spending time abroad per se, as opposed to the actual content of the study or training period. These more general skills and competencies may also be relevant to and have value in the workplace.

3.1.1 Academic learning outcomes and motivation

A learning period abroad provides students with new academic perspectives on their own studies through the contrasts that exposure to different teaching styles and practices provides. They encounter different academic approaches and questions, different ways of learning and teaching methods, different academic content, and different perceptions of quality than those they are familiar with from Norway.¹ A study period or practical training abroad also provides access to more and different study opportunities and different work experience than are available in Norway. Studies show that a learning period abroad also boosts students' motivation.² Motivated students tend to do better in their studies and are less likely to drop out.

In 2019, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) conducted a survey among students and institutions to follow up indications in the national "Study Barometer" student survey of a lack of academic connection between the study programme at home and the students' study or training period abroad.³ However, it is not the case that students always go overseas to take courses that correspond to or are identical to courses offered at their home institution. On the contrary, the fact that exchange students take courses that supplement or complement their study programme at home may in fact be beneficial. Limited academic continuity thus does not preclude high academic relevance. Students often travel in semesters where they are scheduled to take elective courses, and in these semesters they have the option of taking courses that do not have the same obvious connection to their study programme as the other, compulsory

¹ European Commission (2019c).

² Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku & the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2018).

³ Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2019a).

courses. In addition, NOKUT states that the academic relevance of the learning period abroad is mainly ensured through two channels: participation from the academic community when the exchange agreements are established, and preliminary pre-approval of courses in connection with the individual overseas stays.

However, similar to the results of other analyses, NOKUT's survey shows that the students' primary motivation for going abroad is not related to the academic benefits, but to the opportunity to acquire cultural skills, improve their foreign language skills, and general personal development and experience.⁴

3.1.2 Mobility and the labour market

Analyses of the value employers attach to international experience provide inconsistent findings. Both the 2014 and the 2019 Erasmus Impact Study conclude that graduates with international experience perform better on the job market.⁵ Mobile students acquire skills and personal traits that are highly valued and sought after in the workplace, such as problem-solving skills, proactivity, creativity, collaboration skills, and flexibility. Furthermore, graduates with international experience are more often given internationally oriented work.⁶ The Erasmus Impact Study from 2019 found that graduates who had taken part in Erasmus+ were employed more quickly and were more satisfied in their job than non-mobile students, and that they tended to have a slightly higher than average income. The study also showed that 40 per cent of graduates who had participated in an international traineeship or training were employed by or received a job offer from their host company or organisation. However, it must be pointed out that there is no basis for comparing these figures with students who did traineeship or practical training in their home country. Fewer of the Erasmus students were unemployed five years after graduating, compared with other students.

There is limited research on the employability impact of a learning period abroad. Two reviews of research from different countries from 2016 and 2018 respectively conclude that there is a positive correlation between a study period

abroad and attractiveness on the labour market.⁷ In their project "International student mobility: drivers, patterns and impact", the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU) and Oslo Metropolitan University () have reviewed relevant research on student mobility and outcomes in the employment market. They highlight a much-discussed paradox: Employers attach high value to the competencies and skills that students gain from a period of international study, but do not prioritise international experience per se in connection with recruitment and hiring.⁸ This may in part be because employers are not sufficiently aware of the competencies and skills that study or training periods abroad can provide. In this perspective, it is important to increase the students', the academic communities' and study programmes' awareness of the relevant skills and competencies that mobility can stimulate and how these can be rendered more visible. The lack of prioritisation of international experience on the labour market may also in part be explained by the fact that even greater value is attached to other categories of relevant experience. In this context, the researchers point in particular to practical work experience and collaborative activities in which the students help resolve real-life issues. In line with this, it is concluded that not all international experience is assessed equally, and that experience from traineeships, work placement or periods of supervised professional training is valued more highly than ordinary study periods abroad.

Mobility in the form of overseas training periods or traineeships have additional value beyond the value of the practical work experience itself. Students get to experience a different country's work culture and learn about the norms and values, formal and informal, that regulate working life in other countries. In an increasingly international business and social landscape, where the demand for intercultural understanding and international perspectives is growing, training mobility will be able to contribute both international knowledge and valuable networks, both of which will be useful for work in Norway and overseas. One of the main findings of the Erasmus Impact Study is that almost one in ten students who had undertaken a work placement abroad has started their own company, and that more than three out of four students plan to, or can imagine doing so.⁹

⁴ Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2019a), Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU) & Universities Norway – UHR (2013).

⁵ European Commission (2014) and (2019c).

⁶ Wiers-Jenssen (2003).

⁷ Potts (2016), Roy et al. (2018).

⁸ Wiers-Jenssen et al. (2020).

⁹ European Commission (2019c).

Studies also show that overseas training periods make students more confident in their career choices,¹⁰ and good and secure career choices will mean a lower drop-out rate and that students are more organised and focused in their studies. Given the potential of international traineeships and the fact that Norway makes little use of this opportunity by international standards, this is an area that ought to be paid greater attention going forward.

A new empirical study from Norway confirms the main impression that a learning period abroad has relatively limited impact on how well graduates do in the labour market. The researchers set out to explore whether there was a difference in unemployment between graduates who had undertaken a study or training period abroad during their studies or had similar international experience and other students, and whether there was a difference in the relevance of their work in light of their education. The main finding, after controlling for relevant background variables, was that international mobility has limited impact on graduate unemployment and the relevance of employment. The exception in this respect is the subject area economics and administration, where students with international experience do slightly better in the labour market than students without international experience. Furthermore, the results suggest that students with strong admission grades tend to profit more from learning periods abroad.¹¹

Students who take a full degree abroad do relatively better in the labour market now compared to how they did a few years ago. The main finding of the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU)'s report *The early career impact of education from abroad* from 2019 is that individuals who have taken a full master's degree abroad do as well, and on some indicators better, in the employment market as those who have not taken education abroad.¹²

Surveys of what Norwegian employers prioritise in connection with recruitment confirm the main impression that the skills and competencies associated with internationalisation are valued in and of themselves, while a study or work period abroad is relatively low on employers' lists of requirements for new hires.¹³ Similarly, the

Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO)'s Skills Barometer from 2019¹⁴ indicates that employers want the kinds of competencies that international exchanges and learning periods abroad can help foster. In view of this, raising awareness and visibility concerning the value of student mobility remains important challenges.

3.1.3 Personal development, social and cultural education, and general skills

Students who go abroad to study need to adapt to a new way of life and a new learning environment. This promotes general skills and abilities, such as problem solving, collaboration skills, self-confidence, tolerance and openness towards alternative ways of doing things, decision-making skills, active citizenship, and political and social engagement.¹⁵ While these kinds of skills and abilities of course are useful in connection with education and work, they can also be of great value to the individual in life in general.

Studying abroad can also contribute to greater cultural understanding.¹⁶ A number of countries are seeing growing polarisation and radicalisation of the political climate, meaning that intercultural competence, empathy and values that help prevent radicalisation will become even more important in higher education in the future. This applies not only in view of the fact that many people will be working in or with other countries, but also with regard to being able to deal with cultural challenges at work and in society at large. Regardless of whether an individual works in the private sector or in public service production, intercultural understanding is a useful generic skill for the workforce of tomorrow. This skill can also be developed without mobility, but a study or training period abroad is an effective way of acquiring it. As several studies have pointed out, studying or training abroad does not always result in intercultural skills and understanding. It depends on the student being able or encouraged to reflect on their own behaviours and norms in encountering a different culture. Some people may already have this ability to self-reflect, while others may need

¹⁰ Potts (2016).

¹¹ Wiers-Jenssen & Støren (2020).

¹² Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education – NIFU (2019b).

¹³ Støren et al. (2019).

¹⁴ Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education – NIFU (2019d).

¹⁵ Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU) & Universities Norway – UHR (2013), European Commission (2019c), Potts (2016), Roy et al. (2018).

¹⁶ Potts (2016), Roy et al. (2018), European Commission (2019c).

guidance in the form of organised preparatory or follow-up work.¹⁷

At the same time, it is important to note that due to demographic changes of the recent decades, it is now possible to acquire international and intercultural experience without going abroad. The composition of the general population and the student population in Norway indicates that students in higher education will meet significant numbers of people with a different cultural, educational and social background and experiences to themselves. This in itself represents a valuable potential arena for internationalisation.

English is the dominant academic language among mobile students. Some outbound Norwegian students also follow teaching in other languages, and a few inbound students learn Norwegian. However, it is mainly English language skills that are improved in connection with an academic exchange. English language proficiency is also most in demand by Norwegian companies, according to the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO)'s Skills Barometer for 2018.¹⁸ Almost half of the companies responded that they needed English language proficiency, while the second most in-demand language proficiency was German, with 13 per cent saying they needed this. Students who spend a prolonged period of time in a foreign country or who already know the relevant foreign language can learn or greatly improve their skills in languages other than English.

3.2 Benefits for society

In addition to the benefits for the individual students and the higher education sector, mobility will also have positive consequences for society as a whole. These include benefits related to democracy, knowledge diplomacy and the economic effects of Norwegian students going abroad and international students spending time in Norway.

3.2.1 Bolstering support for liberal democracy

By strengthening students' international orientation and intercultural competence, student mobility can help counter national tensions and anti-democratic forces. In the EU, Erasmus+ is seen as

a means of promoting cohesion and positive social behaviour, countering extremism and anti-democratic tendencies, and increasing the social inclusion of vulnerable groups.¹⁹ The liberal democratic aspect of student mobility has recently resurfaced as an important political element, after having been somewhat overshadowed by interests related to the economy, employment and industry for several years.

3.2.2 Country knowledge and knowledge diplomacy

Intercultural competence and language proficiency were highlighted above as positive effects of mobility that benefit the individual student. However, these effects also benefit society as a whole. Another benefit is greater knowledge of the country students travel to and spend time in. This kind of in-depth knowledge about a specific country is different to intercultural competency, which is a general ability to manoeuvre in a multicultural setting, regardless of which cultures and nations are involved. As a society, Norway benefits greatly from Norwegian students acquiring concrete knowledge about specific countries. In this context, it has been a long-standing goal in Norwegian policy for the education and research field to have outbound students go to Norway's priority partner countries. International networks in the higher education and research sector can help build common identities and defuse or resolve conflicts and tensions in other, more controversial fields. In this way, student mobility is part of the emerging concept of "knowledge diplomacy".

3.2.3 Labour market and socio-economic gains

The current era is characterised by major societal challenges that require international solutions, and a labour market that is becoming increasingly more international. The knowledge, skills and competencies that students gain through international mobility in general and training mobility in particular are vital to our ability to educate students to meet tomorrow's challenges and a changing labour market. Today, many Norwegian workers already need to be capable of functioning as part of an international workforce, and in the future, this will be the case in a growing number of occupations and industries. There is nothing to

¹⁷ Roy et al. (2018), Wikan & Klein (2017).

¹⁸ Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education – NIFU (2018).

¹⁹ European Commission (2019c).

suggest that the need for international experience and expertise will diminish in the foreseeable future. The Government therefore wants more students to go abroad and gain international experience, through both study and training periods.

In addition to Norwegian students who go abroad bringing new knowledge, perspectives and networks back home to Norway, international students who come to Norway can also offer in-demand expertise and innovation to Norwegian workplaces and trade and industry, if they stay and work here after they complete their degree. Inbound students who stay on and transition to employment in Norway integrate faster and better than foreign workers who have no experience of Norway before they get a job here. Accepting international students can therefore be an efficient way of providing the Norwegian knowledge economy with highly qualified workers.

Innovation often occurs in the interface between different perspectives, combined with knowledge of the latest advances in different areas. This can take place in connection with inbound international students and returning Norwegian students.

At the same time, there appears to be something of a communication challenge in this respect, such that the knowledge and expertise that students acquire through international mobility is not being fully utilised. In the much-discussed report *Hidden Competences* published by the Finnish Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) in 2014, it is argued that a learning period abroad contributes greatly to the skills employers look for in candidates, but without employers seeing this as related to international experience. This includes, for example, foreign language skills and cultural knowledge, intercultural understanding and communication skills, ability to collaborate, problem solving, and entrepreneurship. It appears from Norwegian and international studies that employers attach little importance to international competence in the recruitment process.²⁰ Part of the explanation for this challenge in Norway is the structure of our business sector, which is dominated by small companies.

With the forthcoming white paper on labour market relevance in higher education, the Government aims to strengthen the cooperation between higher education and the labour market.

Closer collaboration will also help ensure better use can be made of international competence.

Aside from the fact that international student mobility leads to the flow of skills and expertise across borders, international students in Norway have a positive impact on the economy, even if they do not pay tuition fees. They spend money during their study period, and if they work in Norway during or after their studies, they pay tax. This has been demonstrated in a number of studies from other European countries. According to an official Danish report from 2018, international students make a net contribution to the nation's public finances.²¹ Studies from Finland, Germany and the Netherlands reach similar conclusions.²² This positive financial contribution is primarily related to students who stay on and work in the country after graduation, but it also comes from students who work alongside studying and from the money that international students (and their friends and family who visit them) spend and thereby inject into the national economy.

3.3 Benefits for the higher education sector

Student mobility has implications for higher education institutions beyond the benefits it entails for the individual inbound or outbound student. For example, mobile students can help enhance the quality of education, strengthen the ties between academic groups and institutions, make study environments more international, and boost the institutions' reputation. The internationalisation of student communities is particularly important for students who do not themselves have a period abroad and can ensure that they too are exposed to international perspectives and influences.

3.3.1 Strengthen institutional cooperation

Since the 2003 Quality Reform, it has been an express goal to ensure student mobility is linked to research and teaching cooperation between academic groups and between institutions. The aim has been to make mobility a more integrated part of the study programmes and thus more aca-

²⁰ Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education – NIFU (2016), Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education – NIFU (2019c), Van Mol (2017).

²¹ Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science (2018).

²² Centre for International Mobility – CIMO (2014), CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (2012), German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD (2013).

demically relevant, but also to strengthen academic and institutional cooperation through student mobility. The networks that are created and the interaction that occurs through student mobility provides a basis for academic discussions and in the long term perhaps also research cooperation. The institutions can recruit talented students, some of whom will go on to do a doctoral degree and join the academic staff. International alumni networks are also useful in terms of long-term research and teaching cooperation. Institutional agreements that encompass both academic cooperation and student mobility will further underpin this.

Student mobility can also be useful in connection with establishing international work or training opportunities, in the sense that traineeships etc. can be found via the networks of people who have studied in Norway and who later work in relevant positions in other countries. There are also examples of partnerships that initially encompassed only education and/or student mobility, but that evolved to also include research and innovation.²³ This approach may be particularly apt to establish cooperation in countries where Norwegian academic groups have few contacts, but want to develop academic partnerships.

3.3.2 Better and more relevant education and research

A study or training period abroad adapted to the individual study programme may improve the programme, for example by enabling students to take modules that their home institution does not offer, or the opportunity to take courses in areas where the partner institution is academically stronger. With their perspectives and expertise, visiting foreign students enable Norwegian institutions to see the education they offer in a comparative perspective and measure themselves against other countries. Most Norwegian students will also have to relate to perspectives from other countries in their future careers. Talented inbound students also help raise the level of research.²⁴

3.3.3 Internationalisation at home

The fact that some students go abroad, and international students come to Norway enables students who are not themselves mobile during their

education to encounter international perspectives and influences. The international students who come to Norway can contribute directly to a more international study environment at Norwegian institutions, and on their return, Norwegian students who go abroad can share their experiences with their study environment at home. However, this presupposes that the interaction between the international students and the Norwegian students is good, and that the lessons learned by people who have been abroad are incorporated into the teaching at home. This effect will be stronger if mobility is properly integrated into the study programmes and if it is part of an established academic partnership between a Norwegian and an overseas institution.

3.3.4 Reputation and visibility

Student mobility is an indicator in international rankings and thus plays a role in promoting the institution's visibility and reputation. In a global and increasingly commercial education market with competition for the best students,²⁵ Norwegian institutions need to pay growing attention to their international visibility and reputation. This will also be important in connection with finding good, recognised international partners for research cooperation.

The option to take part of the programme abroad can also help make institutions more attractive to Norwegian students. This has gained traction since the restructuring of the state funding of higher education in Norway in the early 2000s, with the introduction of a system whereby part of the funding now depends on the number of students at the institution and the number of credits they complete.

3.4 Choice of instruments

There are thus many motives for prioritising international student mobility and many positive potential effects of mobility. In choosing policies and instruments, there must therefore be a clear focus on what results and achievements that are wanted.

Attracting international degree students in order to recruit them to work in Norway after graduating requires a different approach com-

²³ Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education – SIU (2013).

²⁴ British Council (2019).

²⁵ This development is linked to cuts in government funding and the introduction of tuition fees in more and more countries.

pared to establishing institutional exchange cooperation. Having Norwegian students on exchange to partner institutions in Europe because of cooperation between academic staff, is different to sending students to priority partner countries as these countries are also important global players and trading partners. Another aspect is sending students abroad due to a lack of capacity at home, as is the case in medicine, for example. Norway's policy for education and research aims to safeguard the interests of the individual student, society as a whole, and the higher education institutions.

A marked increase in the number of students who go abroad for a study or training period will require well-organised mobility stays. A good framework will help ensure academically integrated stays at partner institutions abroad. At the same time, this could lead to exchange students ending up in a study environment with co-students from Norway, thereby preventing some of the challenges international exchange students have previously faced concerning socialisation and an unfamiliar environment. It is important that the institutions are aware of the kinds of learning outcomes that different types of mobility can have.

Another question is how useful study or training periods abroad are in terms of finding a relevant job after graduation. The research is undecided on this point. The value of studying abroad and the general competencies it provides ought therefore to be made clearer to Norwegian employers. In addition, the type of mobility concerned will determine how big an impact it has on work after graduation. Training mobility seems to

have the strongest and most direct impact.²⁶ The length of the overseas stay appears to have less impact on the benefits in terms of both graduate employability and academic learning outcomes than it does on generic skills and foreign language proficiency, where a long period abroad will have more impact than a short one.

The following chapters explore different types of mobility, and will also address a number of other issues, including: the use of English versus other languages; the recruitment of international students to the Norwegian labour market versus migration control and preventing 'brain drain' from countries in the Global South; increased mobility per se versus mobility to specific priority partner countries; and political aims and priorities versus students' rights and freedom of choice.

The political goals for outbound mobility must be achieved, at the same time it is important not to lose sight of the purpose of mobility – for the individual students, for society, and for the higher education sector. In addition to highlighting that student mobility contributes to personal development, the academic learning outcomes and relevance to the study programme must also be stressed. For the institutions, both inbound and outbound mobility must be given a central place in the work to ensure quality and relevance in the study programmes, at the same time as it must be recognised that stays abroad have an intrinsic value for the students as individuals and can also benefit society at large.

²⁶ European Commission (2019c).

4 Outbound mobility

Norwegian higher education institutions have always had an international dimension to their activities, and many agreements have been entered into with overseas institutions that have included student mobility. However, this field received increased attention with the introduction of the Quality Reform in 2003 and the goal that all students must have the opportunity to have a learning period abroad as part of their Norwegian degree. In part as a result of international constraints concerning what can be regarded as student mobility, greatest political priority has been given to study or training periods abroad of at least three months' duration and mobility linked to institutional cooperation.

Although there has been a concerted effort to make it easier for Norwegian students to take part of their education abroad since 2003, only 16 per cent of the graduates in 2019 had undertaken a learning period abroad. For previous years there was only a limited increase. This nevertheless means that the Bologna target of 20 per cent of students having a study period abroad during the course of their studies is within reach. The long-term target that half of all students will have a study period abroad is a far more ambitious goal, and will require a cultural change throughout the entire higher education sector with structural and administrative adaptations. Today, all students who wish to do so should have the opportunity to take part of their education abroad. However, the fact that only one in six students take advantage of this opportunity may indicate that going abroad depends too much on the individual students taking the initiative themselves. In order to increase student mobility, study or training periods abroad must become an integral part of all study programmes, and the institutions must do much more to facilitate this. The value of a learning period abroad must also be made clearer to everyone involved. Some institutions and study programmes have already achieved or are close to achieving the goal of 50 per cent of students having a study period abroad. This proves that it can be done, and these institutions and programmes can serve as good examples.

4.1 Motivation and obstacles for students

The benefits of having a study period abroad during the course of study are many, and the abilities acquired and the academic, personal and language benefits are clear. Nevertheless, only 16 per cent of Norwegian students have had an overseas stay during the course of their studies. It is therefore important to find out more about what prevents Norwegian students from going abroad for a study or training period. In the Eurostudent survey from 2018, which collected data on the social and economic conditions of student life in European countries, 21 per cent of Norwegian students said that they planned to have a study or training period abroad, while 65 per cent of the respondents said they did not have any such plans.¹ In the survey, students were also asked to rank various obstacles to studying abroad. Additional financial burden, separation from partner, child(ren) and friends, and loss of paid job were listed as the biggest obstacles. Non-academic reasons are thus the main obstacles to outbound mobility, but a large proportion of students also report that lack of information, the perception that the studies abroad are not really relevant to their home study programme, and the feeling that the learning period abroad is of low benefit to their education in Norway are important reasons for not going abroad. Although the academic obstacles seem to be less important to the students who have responded than the non-academic obstacles, the academic obstacles are something that Norwegian universities and university colleges can do something about.

According to the students' responses, there is wide variation in how well the institutions manage to incorporate a study period abroad into the study programme at home, both between institutions and between subject areas. There is also wide variation in the students' perception of the quality of the information they have received about the possibility of taking a study period

¹ Statistics Norway – SSB (2018).

abroad. At some institutions, up to 20 per cent of students state that they experience inadequate information as a major obstacle. The same results were seen in the 2017 Study Barometer national student survey, where one in five students who had not participated in a study period abroad said that the information was not good enough.² The proportion of the respondents who find it as a major obstacle that a mobility stay does not fit into the study programme at home is also generally high, but here too there are differences between subject areas. Among other things, one in four teacher students answer that a study or training period abroad does not fit into the study programme at home, while the corresponding figure in information and computer technology, for example, is 11 per cent. This may indicate that there are differences in attitudes towards mobility both between institutions and between subject areas.

In meetings held with students to get input for this white paper, many students state that lack of encouragement from lecturers is a major factor in their decision not to go abroad. For the students who have had a learning period abroad, encouragement from lecturers was mentioned as a decisive factor. In other words, the lecturers play a very central role.

Although there are significant differences between institutions and between subject areas, it is important to incorporate the general findings into the work to get more students to go on an international mobility stay. With respect to the perception that it is expensive to go on an international mobility stay, it is important to inform students about the good financial support schemes that exist through the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) and especially through Erasmus+. It is harder for institutions to do something about the non-academic elements, but here the work on bringing about a cultural change and establishing an expectation concerning mobility from day one among both the institutions and the students will be very important.

Students with special needs also encounter a number of other obstacles in addition to the general obstacles, related to practical adaptation, information, lack of knowledge among key actors, and lack of coordination. It is important to attempt to also tackle the additional challenges this group faces when working to increase mobility among students in general.

² Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2018b).

4.2 Quantitative overviews

There are at least two different ways of measuring student mobility. In this white paper, we have used two groups of figures from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)'s Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH). The first group of figures shows the proportion of graduates in a particular cohort (i.e. the students who complete a degree in a particular year) who have had a mobility stay during their studies (regardless of when they went abroad). These figures are used in this white paper in the overviews of which institutions students have gone abroad from, and the proportions within the different subject areas and educational levels.

The second group of figures shows how many students have had a mobility stay each year and which countries they went to. These figures are used in the overview of how many students undertake a learning period abroad and which countries they travel to.

4.2.1 How many students go abroad for study or training period?

Table 4.1 provides an overview of how many students who undertook a study or training period abroad each year in the period 2010–2019. Using both sets of figures mentioned above, we find that approximately 7,400 students had a learning period abroad in 2019, and that 7,900 of the 2019 graduates had had an overseas stay during their study period (cf. section 4.2). The first group of figures is used in table 4.1. There has been a continuous increase in the number of outbound exchange students, with the exception of in 2015, when there was no change from the previous year. From 2018 to 2019, there was an increase of 5 per cent, while the increase over the period as a whole was 47 per cent. The years 2010, 2011 and 2016 saw the largest individual increases.

Compared with the change in the total number of students in Norway, the proportional increase for the number of students who have had a learning period abroad each year is almost twice as large as the proportional increase in the total number of students in Norway – 47 per cent versus 26 per cent. The increase was also significantly higher in most of the eleven individual years during this period, with the exception of the years 2012–2015.

Table 4.1 Number of outbound exchange students in total per year (2010–2019), total number of students in Norway per year (2010–2019), and the relative change (%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change (%) 2010–2019
Number of outbound exchange students	5 050	5 573	5 666	5 698	5 757	5 754	6 268	6 575	7 036	7 422	47%
Change (%) from the previous year	12%	10%	2%	1%	1%	0%	9%	5%	7%	5%	
Number of students in Norway	206 995	217 915	226 816	232 693	236 808	246 058	253 738	257 155	258 564	261 457	26%
Change (%) from the previous year	3%	5%	4%	3%	2%	4%	3%	1%	1%	1%	

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

Table 4.2 Outbound exchange students per year (2010–2019), per country, and the relative change (%)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total	Change (%) 2010–2019
Australia	627	627	690	668	744	799	919	1 022	1 098	1 263	8 457	101%
USA	983	1 167	1 266	1 246	1 223	1 215	983	896	836	842	10 657	-14%
United Kingdom	460	458	499	526	509	423	480	522	545	511	4 933	11%
France	224	290	247	265	234	279	266	312	320	363	2 800	62%
Spain	166	175	197	206	161	177	283	233	313	336	2 247	102%
Denmark	257	279	237	262	269	215	264	292	310	323	2 708	26%
Italy	87	102	88	89	121	114	157	178	230	308	1 474	254%
Germany	224	196	228	212	259	255	361	311	257	287	2 590	28%
The Netherlands	135	122	136	133	124	131	202	238	230	282	1 733	109%
Tanzania	98	140	159	164	157	205	175	200	198	221	1 717	126%
Canada	153	162	137	172	140	169	178	203	174	164	1 652	7%
Portugal	75	55	70	62	70	73	70	95	167	161	898	115%
China	69	112	90	88	91	104	83	102	129	149	1 017	116%
South Africa	139	167	162	149	139	118	156	172	168	140	1 510	1%
Sweden	113	150	137	133	112	125	153	121	123	129	1 296	14%
Japan	54	47	63	29	68	59	76	122	154	123	795	128%
Singapore	90	108	116	118	120	86	101	128	143	116	1 126	29%
New Zealand	93	107	88	80	110	97	107	110	99	114	1 005	23%
Other	1 003	1 109	1 056	1 096	1 106	1 110	1 254	1 318	1 542	1 590	12 184	58%
Total	5 050	5 573	5 666	5 698	5 757	5 754	6 268	6 575	7 036	7 422	60 799	47%

Countries with more than 100 students in 2019.

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

4.2.2 Which countries do they go to?

The English-speaking countries of Australia, the USA and the United Kingdom dominate in terms of which countries Norwegian students prefer to go to for a study or training period abroad (table 4.2). In the past ten years, these three countries have consistently been the top three outbound exchange destinations. They have all also seen a rise in the number of exchange students from Norway during the period, with Australia having the strongest growth of the three. Australia was also the most popular destination in 2019.

All the countries in table 4.2 have seen a relative increase in the number of Norwegian students from 2010 to 2019, apart from the USA, which had a slight decrease from 2010 to 2019. The USA is nevertheless still the second most popular destination for Norwegian students, and the number of Norwegian exchange students to the USA has remained fairly stable in recent years.

Italy, Japan and Tanzania have had the largest increases in the period, but it should be noted that these countries received very low numbers of Norwegian students in 2010. Among the countries that already had at least 100 Norwegian students in 2010, the Netherlands has had the largest increase (109 per cent). Other countries that have seen a substantial increase include Australia, up by 101 per cent, and Spain, up by 102 per cent. South Africa, Canada and the USA experienced the weakest growth over the period as a whole.

Norway has prioritised cooperation on higher education and research with selected countries within and outside Europe. In 2019, a number of these countries were non-anglophone. Good language proficiency in languages other than English is important for Norwegian society and economy. The figures in table 4.2 illustrate that there is potential for more student exchange with these countries.

4.2.2.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government wants a higher proportion of Norwegian students to go abroad on study or training period in non-anglophone countries than is currently the case.
- The Government wants more Norwegian students to prioritise going abroad on study or training period to the non-anglophone countries among Norway's priority partner countries in higher education and research.

- The Government wants to make changes to the regulations governing the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånkassen) in order to increase student mobility to Norway's priority partner countries, and will return to the budgetary implications in the work on the annual national budgets.

4.2.3 Which Norwegian institutions do they travel from?

The targets set for the proportion of students who should have a learning period abroad, i.e. 20 per cent by 2020, with an ambition of 50 per cent in the longer term, are national average targets. The overview for 2019 shows that there is wide variation between the individual institutions and subject areas. The national average of 16.3 per cent masks a complexity that needs to be taken into account in the work to increase student mobility.

Table 4.3 shows that seven institutions have a mobility rate of 20 per cent or more, i.e. in line with the Bologna target. At the other end of the scale, eight institutions had a mobility rate of less than 10 per cent. Over the last three years, the institutions have generally had a fairly stable mobility rate. VID Specialized University and Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO) have had the largest increases. Interestingly, two of the four institutions with the highest mobility rates in Norway – Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) and the University of Bergen (UiB) – have seen their student mobility rate decline or remain stable in the last three years.

In other words, there are significant differences between the institutions; however, there are also large differences internally within the institutions and between the same subject areas at different institutions. At some institutions and in some subject areas, there is huge potential for increasing student mobility.

4.2.4 The educational level and subject areas of Norwegian exchange students

Table 4.4 shows the proportion of students who completed a degree in 2019 who had been on a mobility stay abroad during the course of their studies. It should be noted that for students who completed a master's degree, the learning period abroad may have been during their bachelor's degree. For this reason, the proportion of students with a study or training period abroad is

Table 4.3 2019 graduates and graduates with an international mobility stay, number and per cent (2017–2019)

Institution	2019 graduates	Graduates with an international mobility stay				Change in percentage points 2017–2019
		Number 2019	Share 2019	Share 2018	Share 2017	
NHH Norwegian School of Economics	1 087	650	60%	59%	57%	3
Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO)	124	37	30%	28%	31%	-1
University of Bergen (UiB)	2 962	826	28%	27%	28%	0
University of Oslo (UiO)	4 625	1 065	23%	22%	20%	3
Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO)	192	41	21%	13%	11%	10
Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	1 128	236	21%	24%	22%	-1
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)	7 468	1 463	20%	18%	19%	1
Volda University College (HVO)	522	97	19%	20%	23%	-4
Lovisenberg Diaconal University College (LDH)	222	42	19%	16%	23%	-4
University of Agder (UiA)	2 404	427	18%	20%	18%	0
BI Norwegian Business School	3 331	561	17%	16%	15%	2
VID Specialized University	867	134	15%	18%	9%	6
Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH)	149	21	14%	12%	12%	2
University of Stavanger (UiS)	2 289	313	14%	12%	13%	1
Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH)	243	32	13%	21%	15%	-2
Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL)	3 167	394	12%	14%	13%	-1
Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet)	3 917	462	12%	11%	11%	1
University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway (UiT)	2 756	305	11%	9%	8%	3
Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (HiNN)	2 072	194	9%	9%	9%	0
University of South-Eastern Norway (USN)	2 874	246	9%	9%	8%	1
Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (DMMH)	311	24	8%	11%	13%	-5
Østfold University College (HiØ)	1 054	88	8%	7%	11%	-3
Molde University College – Specialized University in Logistics (HiMolde)	405	29	7%	6%	15%	-8
MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society	163	10	6%	6%	6%	0
Kristiania University College (HK)	1 462	80	5%	6%	7%	-2
NLA University College	373	16	4%	6%	5%	-1
Nord University	1 918	82	4%	5%	4%	0
Total	48 333	7 892	16%	16%	16%	0

The overview includes only institutions that have at least 100 graduates, whereas the totals also include students from smaller institutions.

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

Table 4.4 Number of graduates, graduates with a mobility stay and share (2019). Type and level of education

Level of education	Total	Mobility	Share
<i>First-cycle degree level</i>	31 853	3 878	12%
Bachelor's degree, 3-year	29 545	3 681	12%
Vocational training, 4-year	2 052	178	9%
<i>Second-cycle degree level</i>	12 026	2 365	20%
Master's degree, 2-year	10 442	2 337	22%
Master's degree, experience-based, 1.5–2 years	1 336	19	1%
<i>Integrated master's degree / professional study</i>	4 454	1 649	37%
Master's degree, 5-year	3 423	1 349	39%
Programme of professional study	1 031	300	29%
<i>Total</i>	48 333	7 892	16%

The data include a few other categories, but due to the low number of graduates they have been omitted here. However, they are included in the total.

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

higher at the master's level than at the bachelor's level.

Table 4.5 shows figures from 2019 for the various different subject areas. There is large variation between subject areas in terms of the proportion of students who had study or training period overseas during their studies, from 8 per cent in teacher education and education science to 25 per cent in social sciences and law subjects.

4.3 Cultural change

As mentioned in chapter 1, the overarching goal of this white paper is to bring about a cultural change throughout the entire higher education sector so that student mobility is regarded as an important and natural part of a qualitatively good education to a greater extent than today. The Government wants student mobility to become an integral part of both the study programmes and the work to enhance the quality of Norwegian higher education. The consultation responses submitted in connection with the work on the white paper indicate that the sector largely concurs with the five factors that the Government, in the call for consultation input, stated it believes will be necessary to implement a cultural change (cf. chapter 1).

4.3.1 Student mobility as part of the cooperation between institutions

In order to ensure that the internationalisation of higher education helps raise the quality, relevance and attractiveness of Norwegian higher education institutions, it will be important that student mobility is integrated into and rooted in cooperation between Norwegian and foreign institutions (cf. white paper Report no. 14 to the Storting (2008–2009)).³ It is important that Norwegian institutions have excellent cooperation with overseas institutions, and that student mobility is included as a natural part of the cooperation. This kind of cooperation should include employees and students, both administrative and academic functions, and the leadership. The agreements should include research elements where this is feasible in practical terms and academically appropriate. A comprehensive portfolio of agreements with carefully selected partner institutions ought to be managed both centrally and at the faculty and departmental levels at the institution, so that internationalisation consistently permeates the study programmes and the study environment at the institution. One initiative that helps facilitate institutional cooperation is the *European Universities*

³ Report no. 14 to the Storting (2008–2009) *Internationalisation of education in Norway*.

Table 4.5 2019 graduates and graduates with a mobility stay, number and percentage. Subject area and level

Education	Total	Mobility	Share
<i>Health, social and sports subjects</i>	11 230	1 330	12%
First-cycle degree level	8 762	957	11%
Second-cycle degree level	1 617	186	12%
Integrated master's degree / professional study	851	187	22%
<i>Humanities and aesthetic subjects</i>	4 003	690	17%
First-cycle degree level	2 527	433	17%
Second-cycle degree level	1 403	243	17%
Integrated master's degree / professional study	73	14	19%
<i>Teacher education and education science</i>	7 048	533	8%
First-cycle degree level	5 346	322	6%
Second-cycle degree level	1 077	74	7%
Integrated master's degree / professional study	625	137	22%
<i>Natural science, vocational and technical subjects</i>	9 822	1 860	19%
First-cycle degree level	5 198	518	10%
Second-cycle degree level	2 977	519	17%
Integrated master's degree / professional study	1 647	823	50%
<i>Social sciences and law</i>	6 033	1 520	25%
First-cycle degree level	3 362	659	20%
Second-cycle degree level	1 465	386	26%
Integrated master's degree / professional study	1 206	475	39%
<i>Economic and administrative subjects</i>	9 201	1 882	20%
First-cycle degree level	5 999	956	16%
Second-cycle degree level	3 157	913	29%
Integrated master's degree / professional study	45	13	29%
Total	48 333	7 892	16%

Due to very low graduate numbers, the following subject areas have been excluded from the overview: transport and safety subjects and other service subjects, primary industry subjects, and undisclosed subject area. However, the total also includes these students.

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

initiative (cf. the more detailed discussion in section 4.3.5).

Good agreements are a prerequisite for good cooperation between the institutions. The institutions are expected to carefully consider how many agreements they need. One strategy is to concentrate on fewer, larger agreements, while maintaining a broader range of smaller agree-

ments for students with special interests. Another approach is to ensure a large number of agreements, so that students are spread across them without too much concentration on any single agreement. Whichever strategy is chosen, agreements should be entered into that make it easier for students to decide where to go for study or training period abroad. In addition,

when the academic community is familiar with the education offered at the foreign institution, the process of preliminary pre-approval can also be simplified and the students may feel more confident, since the options available to them have been quality assured.

Many institutions perceive challenges linked to having to find relevant partners on their own, initiate a dialogue with them, and then establish a cooperation that is suitable in terms of relevance, quality and attractiveness, while also being productive and not hampered by, for example, regulations or approval procedures. One example of the kinds of challenges that can arise is the different division into semesters both within Europe and in countries outside Europe, and especially misalignment between the start and end of semesters. This can impede student mobility.

It can also be particularly challenging for small institutions and academic communities to establish good agreements with overseas institutions. In these kinds of cases, joint agreements with overseas institutions may be an appropriate solution. This will facilitate the process of assuring the academic quality of potential partners for the institutions. Other institutions offering similar education can then simply join the joint agreement and reap the benefits that these kinds of partnerships bring.

As a general starting point, the cooperation agreements ought to be anchored in the employees' professional and academic networks. This will help ensure that the institutions choose partners that can strengthen the educational and research activities in line with the institution's own strategic priorities. Experience shows that academic staff who feel commitment to and ownership of the exchange agreements and experience close professional cooperation with the overseas institutions are good at motivating more students to go abroad on study or training period. Using the academic staff's international networks will also ensure the institutions a better starting point for creating good exchange agreements. This can serve to strengthen the link between research and higher education, as well as enabling students to undertake a study period abroad through a quality-assured agreement based on a solid academic foundation.

In their work to increase internationalisation, the institutions ought also to promote a more international learning environment at home. There are numerous different ways of doing this. In order to make it as easy as possible for students to spend time abroad during the course of their

studies, arrangements can be made to enable the employees to develop international professional networks through the agreements. Using foreign guest lecturers may also be a key element in international cooperation, and the partner institutions can choose to coordinate the structure of their programmes. The institutions can also seek to establish exchange agreements in areas where they share common research interests.

In connection with students who take part of their education abroad, the institutions must also be aware of challenges linked to the sharing and transfer of personal data with other higher education institutions.⁴ In particular, there may be challenges linked to the legal basis for transferring personal data to countries outside the EEA, i.e. so-called "third countries". When transferring personal data to third countries, the rules of chapter 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) apply. The rules governing the transfer of personal data in these cases depend on which country the personal data are to be sent to.⁵ For countries deemed not to have an adequate level of data protection⁶, personal data may only be transferred if the recipient of the data has provided "appropriate safeguards", and on the condition that the data subject has enforceable rights and effective legal remedies, cf. Article 46 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). For example, these guarantees can be provided by using the *Standard Contractual Clauses* prepared by the European Commission.

4.3.1.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government expects Norwegian institutions to work strategically to establish mutual, long-term cooperation with overseas institutions, with a strong focus on student mobility.
- The Government expects the internationalisation work, cooperation agreements and student mobility to be a fully integrated part of the general work at the institution.

⁴ Act no. 38 of 15 June 2018 relating to the processing of personal data (*Personal Data Act*). This law incorporates the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

⁵ The European Commission has the power to determine whether a third country or international organisation has an adequate level of data protection (cf. Article 45 of the General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR). This means that the state has rules that safeguard the rights of the data subject in a similar way as countries within the EEA.

⁶ Countries deemed to have an adequate level of data protection are Switzerland, Andorra, the Faroe Islands, Guernsey, Jersey, the Isle of Man, Argentina, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, Japan and Uruguay.

- The Government expects cooperation agreements to be anchored in the employees' professional networks, so that the academic employees have a sense of ownership of them.
- The Government wants to encourage the institutions (especially smaller institutions and/or subjects) to enter into joint exchange agreements among themselves.
- The Government expects the higher education institutions to be aware of the challenges related to the basis for transfer of personal data to third countries where there is no decision on sufficient level of protection and it is not possible to enter into a standard contract.

4.3.2 Integration of student mobility into study programmes and “active opt-out”

In order to achieve the Government's goal that 50 per cent of Norwegian students will have a learning period abroad during the course of their studies, and to achieve the necessary cultural change in the sector, mobility stays must be well integrated into the programmes of study. The Government's ambition is that a study or training period abroad shall become the norm for Norwegian students on programmes where an overseas stay will provide academic benefits and is practically feasible. The input provided by the institutions in their consultation responses and in meetings in connection with the work on this white paper suggests that most institutions support this ambition.

The expected learning outcome of the study or training period abroad must be clearly defined, and a specific window must be incorporated into the programmes where it is appropriate to have an overseas stay. All study programmes must be organised with a fully defined and academically integrated study period or training abroad, and a scheme shall be introduced in which students must actively opt out of the overseas stay, so-called active opt-out. The institutions are free to choose how and when to introduce active opt-out. An overseas learning period shall be voluntary, and the student shall not have to explain the reason for opting out. At all levels, the institutions must have arrangements that enable students to travel abroad and they should actively encourage them to do so. In order to stimulate students to travel abroad, the institutions shall, among other things, increase the use of pre-approved course packages for learning periods abroad and improve the infor-

mation about them. Individuals who for various reasons do not have the opportunity to travel abroad should be offered an international semester at home with, for example, teaching in English in parts of the programme, teaching together with international students, series of lectures with international guest lecturers, etc.

Student mobility must have a solid academic foundation, and it must be made clear why the learning period abroad is relevant and how this experience contributes to learning and the quality of the study programme. In order to achieve the ambitions that student mobility shall be a more integrated part of the study programmes and that student mobility should be the norm, as opposed to the exception, it is imperative that the institutions offer cohesive study programmes. Complete and cohesive study programmes are also highlighted in the Quality Report as a decisive factor for quality in education.⁷ The learning period abroad must be adapted to the nature of the study programme, and different types of overseas stays will target different aspects of the learning outcome for the programme. Good study programme management is essential to be able to achieve this kind of holistic approach to the study programmes, and also to the overall learning outcome of a programme. The ability to successfully integrate various internationalisation elements into a study programme will depend on the management of the study programme.

In its management dialogue with the universities and university colleges, the Government will discuss the individual institution's experiences regarding integration of a study period abroad into their study programmes and, as necessary, will assess possible measures to enable more study programmes to better facilitate international student mobility. In this context, the Government will assess whether stricter requirements need to be set regarding active opt-out.

The academic communities at the institutions must make it clear to students how a study or training period abroad improves the academic quality of education and makes it more work relevant. An important prerequisite for this is that the institutions clearly define the expected learning outcome of the study or training period abroad. Surveys show that students associate study or training periods abroad less with academic learning outcomes, and more with personal develop-

⁷ Report no. 16 to the Storting (2016–2017) *Quality culture in higher education*.

ment.⁸ The development of general skills and personal attributes that are useful and sought after in the work life is also an important part of the overall learning outcome. At the same time, stronger emphasis of the concrete academic learning outcomes may increase the perceived value of study or training period overseas for students and employers alike.

All students who wish to do so should be able to go on a study or practical training period abroad during the course of their studies. This principle also applies to students with disabilities and special needs. The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) has a separate supplementary grant for students who cannot work alongside education due to a disability. Students abroad are entitled to this supplementary grant on the same terms as students studying in Norway. Norwegian higher education institutions also have people who work specifically with students who need special adaptations, and some municipal authorities provide support for user-directed personal assistance during studies abroad.

Adaptation and inclusion are important elements in the EU's education policy. All educational institutions that take part in Erasmus+ have committed to make adaptations to accommodate people with disabilities. Students who need special adaptation and who go on an Erasmus+ mobility stay in Europe may be entitled to Erasmus+ special needs support. The funds shall cover documented additional expenses linked to disabilities, chronic illnesses or other conditions that necessitate special adaptations.

Students with special needs can benefit greatly from having an overseas stay during the course of their studies. It is therefore important that the institutions pay special attention to these students and make arrangements to enable this group of students to benefit from international mobility. Coordination of information and knowledge about instruments, support schemes and good systems for adaptation is important, and it is important that the various parties involved, such as the higher education institutions, directorates, local authorities and local support services, work together to make this happen. Information provided to students about opportunities for overseas stays through, for example, websites and international

offices, must also include information for students with disabilities or other special needs.

The Government's ambition is to ensure that in the long term all institutions introduce a system whereby students must actively opt out of a learning period abroad, as opposed to having to opt in. The institutions can themselves decide how and when this is to be introduced. The study period abroad is voluntary, and students do not have to provide a reason for opting out. Higher education institutions under the Ministry of Defence are exempt from the goal of a predefined learning period abroad and introduction of a system of "active opt-out".

4.3.2.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government's ambition is to ensure that in the long term all institutions introduce a system whereby students must actively opt out of a learning period abroad, as opposed to having to opt in. The institutions can themselves decide how and when this is to be introduced. The study period abroad is voluntary, and students do not have to provide a reason for opting out. Higher education institutions under the Ministry of Defence are exempt from the goal of a predefined learning period abroad and introduction of a system of "active opt-out".
- The Government expects all institutions to make arrangements to ensure that learning periods abroad are well integrated into the programmes.
- The Government's ambition is that a study or training period abroad shall become the norm for all students on programmes where an overseas stay will provide academic benefits and is practically feasible.
- In its management dialogue with the universities and university colleges, the Government will discuss the institutions' experiences regarding integration of a study period abroad into their study programmes and, as necessary, will assess possible measures to enable more study programmes to better facilitate international student mobility. In this context, the Government will assess whether stricter requirements need to be set regarding active opt-out.
- The Government expects the academic communities to make it clearer to students and employers how a study period overseas can help raise the academic quality of study programmes and make them more work relevant.

⁸ Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU) & Universities Norway – UHR (2013).

Box 4.1 Examples of “active opt-out”

Several study programmes at Norwegian higher education institutions already have active opt-out systems. Below are some examples:

University of Oslo (UiO): On the master’s degree in European culture, there is currently a clear expectation that students will have a study period abroad during the programme. Students can apply for exemption from the exchange (“active opt-out”), but they must then have a plan for an alternative programme at home and must take a compulsory field work course with an integrated excursion. The bachelor’s programmes in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Hindi include a compulsory semester of language tuition in a country where the language is used. The teaching is based on pre-arranged, quality assured packages with a defined syllabus and expected learning outcome and is a compulsory part of the study programme. The agreements have been negotiated through partner visits where both administrative and academic employees have participated. The work involved counts as part of their “required duties” for the academic employees. The incentive for the partner institutions is that they can send a similar number of students to the University of Oslo.

University of Bergen (UiB): The University of Bergen is currently testing a pilot scheme for mobility with “active opt-out”. Three study programmes are included in the scheme: the bachelor’s programme in European studies, the bachelor’s programme in German, and the bachelor’s programme in the study of religions. The bachelor’s programme in European studies has made the most progress so far. The programme has partnership agreements that are firmly anchored in the academic environments and can thus preliminarily pre-approve study periods abroad based on the institution, as opposed to being based on the courses the student takes abroad. When the student travels abroad under a pre-approved agreement and takes unspecified or “free” credits, there is no need to pre-approve the courses. Instead of having to apply for pre-approval, the students receive information about general principles and choice of courses during their study period abroad.

4.3.3 Employee mobility and the link between research and higher education

In order to bring about a cultural change throughout the sector, it is also important that more employees go on exchanges to overseas partner institutions. Student mobility is promoted by academic and administrative staff also going abroad. Both academic and administrative staff will play a central role in ensuring a successful cultural change whereby an overseas stay becomes the norm for Norwegian students. The employees are responsible for ensuring that student mobility has a solid academic and administrative foundation, as well as facilitating the actual study period or training abroad. Academic employees also play an essential role in motivating and encouraging students to take a study or training period abroad, and they can show students how an overseas stay provides additional academic and personal benefits.

In the consultation responses to this white paper, the institutions state that experience shows that academic employees who themselves have been or are mobile are better at encouraging and motivating students to take a study period abroad during the course of their studies.

The knowledge, experience, views and encouragement of the academic staff will be pivotal to realising the ambition of increased international student mobility. At the institutions and study programmes where a high proportion of students have a learning period abroad, international cooperation is the case at all levels, from the institutional management right down to the individual study programme, and there is good cooperation between the academic employees and the administration.

Strategic employee mobility is an important tool for strengthening cooperation based on common academic interests and building up knowledge about good, relevant foreign institutions and study programmes that students can go to. Mobility among employees also creates greater opportunities for collaboration on research projects, for guest lectures, and for the development of joint educational opportunities. This can put the academic staff in a better position to recommend high-quality programmes and courses that are academically aligned with and relevant to the study programmes at home.

Box 4.2 Development semester at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, University of Oslo

In connection with the introduction of new bachelor's programmes at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Oslo in autumn 2017, a so-called development semester was established for all study programmes. The development semester allows students to choose between various options that complement their education, such as an international exchange or work placement. Introduction of this kind of specially adapted semester can help make students both more aware of and more motivated to go on a mobility stay abroad.

In the wake of this restructuring, significantly more bachelor's students have gone abroad on a mobility stay from the faculty. In the years 2014 to 2016, about 30 students went abroad for study or training period. By 2018, this number had increased to around 60. This example shows how introduction of a development semester can help increase student mobility.

Source: Mobility figures from Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

Employees' international contacts, collaboration and mobility are necessary to develop the quality and relevance of Norwegian higher education and to ensure that Norwegian higher education maintains a high international standard. This kind of collaboration and mobility should start at the PhD level. Employee mobility can also be an important prerequisite for increased interaction between research and education. Employees can draw on experience and knowledge about how both education and research can benefit from closer cooperation.

4.3.3.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to increase the proportion of academic staff who have a mobility stay abroad, through cooperation agreements that are closely linked to the academic environments, and which integrate student mobility and inter-

nationalisation into cohesive study programmes.

- The Government also finds that mobility ought to be increased among PhD students.
- The Government expects the higher education institutions to use existing research partnerships, where possible, to enter into new, quality-assured and facilitated agreements on student exchange. In these agreements, student mobility ought to be linked to the researchers' international projects and networks.
- The Government expects the higher education institutions to enter into international cooperation agreements, ideally also including research elements, where this is feasible in practical terms and academically appropriate.

4.3.4 Joint degrees

A joint degree is a qualification awarded by at least two cooperating institutions on the basis of a study programme developed and offered jointly by the institutions. Joint degrees are considered the most integrated form of international institutional education cooperation. Since the early 2000s, cooperation on joint degrees has been a priority area in both Norway and Europe. A joint degree entails that two or more institutions together own a study programme and the ensuing degree, and that a single joint diploma is issued by the partner institutions. It must be indicated clearly which parts of the study programme the different institutions are responsible for, and it is a prerequisite that the students move between the participating institutions during the study period. It is also a prerequisite that the elements to be included in a joint degree have been quality assured and accredited as higher education in the respective countries. In Norway, there are no formal legal obstacles preventing institutions from establishing joint degrees, with other Norwegian institutions or in partnership with foreign institutions, and the rules for the establishment and quality assurance of joint degrees are specified in the Regulations concerning quality assurance and quality development in higher education and tertiary vocational education and the Regulations concerning supervision of the educational quality in higher education (the Academic Supervision Regulations).⁹ Other European countries' legisla-

⁹ Regulation no. 96 of 1 February 2010 concerning quality assurance and quality development in higher education and tertiary vocational education, chapter 4. Regulation no. 137 of 7 February 2017 concerning supervision of the educational quality in higher education, section 2-5.

tion also allows institutions to offer joint degrees.¹⁰

Despite the fact that it is legally possible to award joint degrees, nowhere near as many European joint degrees have been established as has been wanted. Formal and administrative obstacles still exist – often linked to quality assurance of the study programmes, payment and distribution of tuition fees, etc. Fewer than 25 per cent of the institutions in the Bologna Process countries participate in a joint degree programme, and fewer than five per cent award joint degrees (albeit with significant differences between countries).¹¹ This proves how challenging it is to establish formal partnerships across national borders in view of domestic regulations, and that it is still very difficult to set up, run and further develop joint degrees.

Despite the clear challenges associated with both the establishment and operation of joint degrees, the Government nevertheless holds that the academic benefits of joint-degree partnerships are so great that it is still desirable that Norwegian higher education institutions prioritise participating in joint-degree partnerships with overseas institutions, including with institutions in Norway's priority partner countries in and outside Europe. For countries that Norway does not have a security policy cooperation with, it is necessary to take special precautions since students studying in these countries may face problems obtaining security clearance for certain professions. Through joint degrees, institutions with different academic strengths can collaborate to offer students high-quality international study programmes that they would not be able to offer on their own. At the same time, students on a joint degree programme have a predefined and pre-approved stay at one or more foreign institutions during the programme, by taking part of their education at the other institutions participating in the joint-degree cooperation.

Joint degrees are a key element in higher education cooperation in Europe and the Nordic countries. *Erasmus+ Joint Master Courses (Erasmus Mundus)* is the European Commission's programme to stimulate joint degrees. The programme aims to promote Europe as a world leader in higher education. The *Nordic Master Programme* is a similar scheme to promote coop-

eration between institutions in the Nordic region. One example of a joint degree cooperation with the support of Erasmus Mundus is the two-year master's degree *European Master in Health Economics and Management* (Eu-HEM). This joint degree has been developed by the Department of Health and Society at the University of Oslo in partnership with the University of Bologna, Management Center Innsbruck and Erasmus University Rotterdam, and graduates receive a joint diploma from the participating institutions.¹²

4.3.4.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government holds that the academic benefits of collaboration on joint degrees are so great that, despite the administrative challenges, it is still desirable that Norwegian higher education institutions prioritise participating in joint-degree partnerships with overseas institutions.
- The Government will consider whether to stimulate collaboration on joint degrees with Norway's priority partner countries. Extra care must be taken when sending students to countries with which Norway does not have a security policy cooperation.

4.3.5 European Universities

Following the EU Summit in December 2017, the European Commission launched a proposal for a new prestige project under the Erasmus+ programme: *European Universities*. As an EEA member state, Norway can participate on an equal footing with the EU member states. *European Universities* has been proposed as an integrated part of the new Erasmus programme, and there is widespread support for this new initiative among the EU member states and Erasmus+ programme countries. *European Universities* is a pilot project that receives approximately EUR 5 million per alliance for three years.

The European Commission's aim with *European Universities* is to establish networks, or alliances, of universities that will collaborate on joint education programmes, develop innovative learning and teaching methods, and facilitate student and research mobility. These alliances are called a "European University". The long-term goal is to establish "European Universities" that operate unhindered by national regulations. These univer-

¹⁰ European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2018), chapter 7, figure 7.3.

¹¹ European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2018), chapter 7, figures 7.4 and 7.5.

¹² <https://www.uio.no/english/studies/programmes/hem-master/>

sities will promote European values and strengthen the competitiveness of European education, cooperating on more international, interdisciplinary, flexible and forward-looking educational opportunities. The “European Universities” will also help develop their local regions, cooperate closely with employers and industry, and play a pivotal role in the development of the European Education Area by 2025.

Many “European Universities” have set a target of (at least) 50 per cent student mobility within the alliance, with a focus on a range of different types of mobility including physical mobility, blended mobility and virtual exchange (see the more detailed discussion in chapter 1). However, the *European Universities* project is about much more than mobility alone, although mobility is a central element. Institutions that are part of a “European University” commit to a long-term strategy that is, naturally, different for the 41 alliances awarded support as a “European University” in 2019 and 2020. Student and staff mobility shall be seamlessly integrated into the new alliances, benefitting the individual students and employees, the institutions and society, as described in chapter 3. The European Commission describes the “European Universities” as “Structured, Systemic and Sustainable”.¹³ The Government holds that the *European Universities* initiative aligns well with the objectives of this white paper. The 17 alliances awarded funding in 2019 as “European Universities” covered a range of fields, including:

- integrated mobility for students and staff
- innovation and student-active learning and teaching
- problem-based learning across the “European Universities” member institutions
- universities that are open to all, with flexible programmes and new forms of mobility
- synergies between research and education
- regional involvement
- openness to the rest of the world
- ways to achieve the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals

The Ministry of Education and Research will engage in dialogue with institutions that participate in the project and assess whether there are conflicts between the desire for increased flexi-

¹³ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/epp-eur-univ-2020>

Box 4.3 European Universities with Norwegian participation

On 26 June 2019,¹ the European Commission awarded funds to 17 “European Universities”, among them two with Norwegian participation, from the University of Bergen (UiB) and the University of Stavanger (UiS). On 9 July 2020,² the European Commission awarded funds to 24 new “European Universities”, among them three with Norwegian participation, from the University of Oslo, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), and NHH Norwegian School of Economics. The University of Oslo is the coordinator of its alliance.

The University of Bergen (UiB) participates in the Arqus Alliance,³ the University of Stavanger (UiS) participates in the ECIU Alliance,⁴ the University of Oslo (UiO) participates in the Circle U. Alliance,⁵ the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) participates in the ENHANCE Alliance,⁶ and NHH Norwegian School of Economics participates in the ENGAGE.EU alliance.⁷

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_3389.

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1264.

³ <https://www.arqus-alliance.eu/>.

⁴ <https://www.eciu.org/>.

⁵ <https://www.circle-u.eu/>

⁶ <https://enhanceuniversity.eu/>.

⁷ <https://engageuniversity.eu/>.

bility and the current Norwegian regulations, with the aim of resolving any potential problems.

4.3.5.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government supports the European Commission’s new *European Universities* initiative and encourages Norwegian institutions to enter into alliances under this scheme.
- The Ministry of Education and Research will have dialogue with Norwegian participating institutions during the pilot period for the *European Universities* initiative, in the event that obstacles arise due to Norwegian regulations.

4.4 Integration into degrees

An important prerequisite for students to be able to take a study period abroad is that they are able to have the courses they take abroad approved (recognised) as part of their degree at home, so that they do not fall behind in their study programme. Before the students go overseas, the home institution pre-approves the courses the students are going to take at the foreign institution. This preliminary pre-approval is intended to ensure that the courses the student takes abroad complement the study programme in terms of both content and learning outcomes. Among other things, preliminary pre-approval is a prerequisite for students to be able to receive funding (loans and grants) from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) for the overseas stay. If the mobility stay is part of an organised exchange programme that entitles the student to support, the student does not need to apply for approval. In order for the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) to approve an overseas stay for support, there is an additional requirement that the stay must not result in a delay in the student's progress.

Many students point out that one of the obstacles to going abroad is that it is uncertain whether they will be able to have the courses they take during a study period abroad incorporated into their degree at home.¹⁴ If the courses cannot be incorporated, this may cause the students to fall behind in their studies and be regarded as having inadequate study progress. If the students are unsure whether they can have courses taken during an overseas stay approved as part of their degree or if they cannot find relevant courses at an overseas institution, they often decide not to go abroad.

According to the Regulation concerning supervision of the educational quality in higher education (the Academic Supervision Regulations), all programmes that lead to a degree must have arrangements for international student mobility. To achieve this, the institutions must organise their programmes such that there is a window for a period of student mobility. Clear "mobility windows" must be established, i.e. specific openings must be scheduled into the programme where the students can travel overseas on a study or training period. The institutions must offer well-organised, integrated mobility stays at both bachelor's and master's level. The programme descriptions should include recommended semesters for mobility, so

that an overseas stay is not at the expense of the students' progress. Creating a clear window for overseas stays in the structure of the study programmes is done differently at the different institutions and in the various programmes of study. Some institutions report that in their bachelor's programmes they schedule a whole semester without any compulsory courses. Organising elective courses and a mobility window in the same semester makes it easier to fit a learning period abroad into the programme, which in turn can make it easier for the academic staff to accept that students choose to go abroad. It may be more difficult to gain acceptance for some of the compulsory courses being taken during an overseas stay, as these may be harder to incorporate than elective courses. This view is also supported in NOKUT's report *Student exchange – at the expense of academic quality?* (see the more detailed discussion of this in chapter 3), and also in NOKUT's EUROMA project, which demonstrates that the Master of Science in Economics programme at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) has achieved good mobility figures by scheduling elective courses and a mobility window in the same semester.¹⁵ Other institutions report that they have a number of pre-approved courses at selected foreign institutions that they know well, enabling students to take both elective and compulsory courses abroad. The University of Bergen (UiB) points out that if there are institutional agreements that are firmly anchored and supported by the academic communities, courses can be pre-approved on the basis of the institution, as opposed to the individual courses the student is going to take abroad.¹⁶ When a student takes courses abroad under a pre-approved agreement and earns unspecified or "free" credits, there is no longer any need for specific pre-approval of the courses.

Many students and institutions express that they find the approval procedures laborious and complicated. The courses must be approved preliminarily before the students go abroad, but in addition, the courses the students have actually taken must be approved once the students have returned home. The reason for this is that in some cases students end up taking different courses to the ones they had pre-approved. Reasons for this

¹⁵ Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2017a).

¹⁶ Consultation response from the University of Bergen (UiB). Retrieved from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/invitasjon-til-a-komme-med-innspill-til-storingsmeldingen-om-internasjonalt-studentmobilitet/id2611424/>

¹⁴ Statistics Norway – SSB (2018).

may include that the portfolio of courses at the foreign university has changed and the pre-approved course is no longer available, or that the student has found other courses that are more relevant. Whatever the reason, this makes the approval procedures cumbersome and time consuming, and a new approval process ought therefore to be established that is simpler and more predictable for the students and the institutions alike. In connection with their work on recognising courses taken abroad, the institutions must adhere to the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which states that education taken abroad must be recognised, unless it can be proven that there are substantial differences.

Institutions ought therefore to have pre-approved course packages at selected foreign institutions that they can offer the students. The academic communities could propose specific courses at specific foreign institutions – courses whose content they know, whose quality they are confident of, and that they know align well with the study programme at their own institution. Pre-approved course packages will make it easier for both the academic and the administrative staff to incorporate the course into the study programme at home, as well as providing certainty for the students that they will be able to have the course taken overseas recognised and approved as part of their degree following their return home. If the students can choose from a selection of quality-assured, pre-approved course packages, this may make it easier for the students to decide to go abroad. Some students have a clear idea about which country, city and institution they want to study at and what courses they want to take abroad. The pre-approved course packages must not prevent these students from fulfilling their wishes, and the institution must therefore have agreements that also safeguard the needs of these students. However, if Norway is to succeed in increasing the proportion of students who have a learning period abroad from 16 per cent to 50 per cent, better arrangements must be made to facilitate overseas stays for students who have not already decided to take part of their studies abroad. Students who are undecided about going abroad must also be considered. The greater degree of certainty that pre-approved course packages will provide will help motivate more students to take part of their studies abroad.

In the 2017 national “Study Barometer” student survey, about half of the students reported that they did not think there was sufficient academic connection between the mobility stay and the study programme at home.¹⁷ The Eurostu-

dent survey also found that it can be difficult to see how the study period overseas fits into the learning outcome defined for the programme.¹⁸ It is important that the students are aware in advance of what kind of competencies they will acquire through their learning period abroad, and it is important that this is communicated to them. Students also need to be able to explain to prospective employers and others what skills and competencies they acquired abroad. In order to be able to demonstrate the academic connection between the study or training period abroad and the programme at home, the institutions must work to better integrate mobility stays into the home programme and not least highlight the connection to the students. For a mobility stay to be successful and academically relevant, it is essential that the students know what is expected of them during their overseas stay and how the course they take abroad contributes to the overall learning outcome for the study programme.

The National Qualifications Framework describes competencies that all students should have on completing an education, regardless of subject area. Learning outcome descriptors have been defined for all three levels of higher education. All students who successfully complete a study programme shall have achieved the learning outcomes defined for that level. Examples of these kinds of overarching learning outcome descriptors are collaboration skills, basic knowledge of the methods and theories of the discipline, problem solving skills, communication skills, etc. The National Qualifications Framework does not currently have any learning outcome descriptors for international competence. Introducing a learning outcome descriptor for international competence in the National Qualifications Framework will highlight the importance of international experience and intercultural understanding. It will be up to the institutions to make arrangements that ensure that students achieve this competence. This can be done through study or training period abroad, through internationalisation at home, or by using, for example, virtual mobility. Introduction of this kind of learning outcome descriptor in the National Qualifications Framework will ensure that all study programmes must define how this competence will be achieved in the particular programme and will therefore be able to help facilitate student mobility.

¹⁷ Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2019a).

¹⁸ Statistics Norway – SSB (2018).

4.4.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to organise all their study programmes with clear mobility windows, so that it is clear to the students when in the programme they will be expected to go abroad.
- The Government wants the institutions to make greater use of pre-approved course packages for student mobility in the programmes of study. These packages will ensure that students know in advance that they will have a quality-assured study period overseas that is a fully integrated part of their degree at home.
- The Government expects the higher education institutions to facilitate academically relevant mobility stays with clear academic connection between the study period abroad and the study programme at home. The students must be informed about the expected learning outcomes for the study period overseas and how the courses they take abroad contribute to the overall learning outcomes for the study programme.
- In connection with their work on approving courses taken abroad, the Government expects the higher education institutions to follow the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which states that education taken abroad must be recognised, unless it can be proven that there are substantial differences.
- The Government will include a learning outcome descriptor for international competence in the Norwegian National Qualifications Framework to underscore the importance of everyone who completes a degree having international experience and understanding.

4.5 Mobility of less than three months

Since the first Erasmus programme was established in 1987, “semester mobility” of at least three months’ duration, has been the norm for student mobility. The Bologna Process perpetuated this, linking its goal of 20 per cent mobility to stays of at least three months’ duration.¹⁹ In Norway too, only mobility of at least three months is included in the statistics and triggers performance-based funding in the funding system for universities and university colleges.²⁰

According to the 2017 national student survey “Study Barometer”, 9 per cent of students had been on a mobility stay abroad that lasted less

than three months – for example, courses, field-work or supervised professional training.²¹ Some instruments for international cooperation are largely geared up to various forms of shorter overseas stays. Examples include partnership programmes such as UTFORSK and INTPART. An analysis of the responses in the 2017 “Study Barometer” survey showed that students who had overseas stays of less than three months experience equally high academic benefits as students with longer study periods abroad.²²

Many relevant actors emphasise that learning periods overseas of less than three months also have value, but that this type of mobility is not recognised or valued when only mobility of over three months is counted in the statistics and triggers performance-based funding in the funding system. Most believe that shorter periods of study abroad ought also to be counted and trigger performance-based funding in the funding system. For educations regulated by a national curriculum where there are many compulsory courses and compulsory teaching to a large extent, many institutions argue that it can be perceived as very demanding to arrange for a study period abroad of a whole semester. It can also be challenging to facilitate exchange stays in many countries outside Europe, North America and Australia, in part because they divide the academic year up differently or structure their programmes differently. In a preliminary report on student mobility between Norway and the Panorama countries, it is pointed out that there has been more short-term mobility between Norway and the Panorama countries since 2012, and that it may appear that it is easier to arrange stays of less than three months to these countries than longer stays.²³ An analysis from the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) and the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) in 2018 pointed out that closer links between education

²⁰ Ministry of Education and Research (2019b). For 2019, the totals were NOK 15,450 for outbound Erasmus+ students, and NOK 10,300 for all other exchange students. The category «exchange students» also includes formalised exchange agreements related to supervised professional training, such as the «clinical practice programme».

²¹ See the «Facts» box in the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019d), p. 34.

²² Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) & the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2018).

²³ Ideas2Evidence & Oxford Research (2019).

¹⁹ See section 2.1.1

and research and between students and teachers were one of the reasons why students with short mobility stays reported high benefits from the overseas stay.²⁴ Offering students the option of flexible or adapted shorter mobility stays may make it easier for more people to go abroad.

Today, different sources of funding have different minimum requirements for the length of mobility stays. The funding system for universities and university colleges only provides performance-based payment for mobility of over three months, Erasmus+ funds training mobility down to two months, and the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) provides support for partial studies abroad down to a minimum duration of four weeks. It can be perceived as unclear why the different funding sources have different requirements, and it ought therefore to be considered whether the requirements can be coordinated and standardised.

4.5.1 Benefits of short stays abroad

Different types of mobility periods abroad yield different learning outcomes, and a significant factor here is the length of the stay (see the more detailed discussion in chapter 3). Some subject areas have a semester-long period of learning abroad at bachelor's level, whereas at master's level, overseas stays tend to be shorter and linked to, say, academic supervision, laboratory work, field work, etc. A period of short-term mobility, such as a period of supervised professional training abroad, can also be very valuable in the educa-

tions regulated by a national curriculum that have compulsory teaching to a large extent (see the more detailed discussion later in this chapter). Short-term mobility can be of great value in and of itself and can also lead to students going on a longer mobility stay later on.²⁵

Both longer and shorter forms of international mobility will help enhance the quality of Norwegian higher education. For some students, perhaps especially those on a programme of professional study, the alternative to going overseas on a short-term mobility stay is not a longer study period abroad, but rather not to go abroad at all. The benefit for the individual student of short-term mobility is huge, compared with not having any kind of overseas stay at all.

Short-term mobility during a master's programme can link Norwegian students and Norwegian higher education and research more closely to knowledge production and strong academic environments outside Norway, and help strengthen the connection between education and research.

4.5.2 Scope of short-term mobility today

According to the Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH), of the almost 48,000 students who graduated in 2019, some 1,241 had participated in a learning period abroad of less than three months during the course of their studies. This corresponds to a share of 2.6 per cent. While 7,892 students, or just over 16 per cent of the graduates, had participated in a learning period abroad of three months or longer. In other words,

²⁴ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) & the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2018).

²⁵ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) & the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2018), Diku (2019b).

Table 4.6 Scope of mobility. Number of graduates in 2019, number and share that had a learning period abroad of longer than and less than 3 months, respectively. Distributed by level of education

	Graduates	Mobility of longer than 3 months	Share longer than 3 months	Mobility of less than 3 months	Share less than 3 months
Total 2019	48 333	7 892	16.3%	1 241	2.6%
First-cycle degree level	31 853	3 878	12.2%	889	2.8%
Second-cycle degree level	12 026	2 365	19.7%	233	1.9%
Integrated master's degree/ professional study	4 454	1 649	37.0%	119	2.7%

The table shows how many of the 2019 graduates have had a mobility stay abroad at some point during their time as a student. This means that for people who completed a master's degree, a study period abroad they had during their bachelor's studies will be counted.

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

there is relatively little short-term mobility compared with mobility of three months or longer, or at least short-term mobility organised through institutional or individual exchange agreements.²⁶

Based on its dialogue with institutions, the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) believes that short-term mobility may be more prevalent than is suggested by the official statistics. This may be because overseas stays of less than three months that are reported to the Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH) do not trigger funding in the funding system for universities and university colleges; nor are they counted in the mobility statistics. The reporting on these kinds of stays is therefore less complete than the reporting on mobility stays of three months or longer.

4.5.3 Criteria for inclusion in the statistics and performance-based funding indicator

The Government holds that short mobility stays abroad can make an important contribution to the work on increasing internationalisation in the sector, and that they can inspire people to take a longer mobility stay later on. Several of the stakeholders in the sector who have submitted a consultation response call for mobility of less than three months to be made more visible in the statistics and stimulated through the funding system for universities and university colleges.

Many of the institutions find it an important recognition of their internationalisation work that short-term mobility is included in the statistics, for example in the annual Status of Higher Education report and by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) and the Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH). For the institutions, arranging shorter mobility stays, and not least work placements, can be just as demanding as arranging whole semester mobility.

The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) already provides support for a study period abroad when the stay has a duration of at least four weeks and is an approved part of a programme of higher education that the applicant has already begun in Norway or abroad.²⁷ This is an argument for applying the same limit in the funding

system for universities and university colleges, so that the students and the institutions both have the same minimum requirement to relate to, as opposed to differing minimum requirements, as is the case today. Considering that there should be reciprocity in exchanges, and that the system should be as uncomplicated and as simple to navigate as possible, financial rewards for short-term mobility ought to be given for both inbound and outbound students, i.e. as is the case today for mobility of at least three months.

Stays shorter than those currently supported by the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen), i.e. shorter than four weeks, can also be valuable for the students and the cooperation between institutions. Examples of this kind of mobility include overseas trips in connection with field courses, excursions where academic employees and students travel abroad together, etc. However, including stays of less than four weeks' duration in the statistics and/or in the funding system for universities and university colleges could provide too strong an incentive in favour of short-term mobility, thereby undermining the objective that the institutions shall primarily work to promote more long-term mobility. It is therefore important to avoid short-term mobility being prioritised at the expense of semester mobility.

4.5.3.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to continue to focus on working to increase whole semester mobility, i.e. an overseas stay of at least three months' duration, but will include mobility of between one and three months' duration in the performance-based indicator for student mobility in the funding system for universities and university colleges as soon as possible.

4.6 Professional study programmes

4.6.1 Mobility in curricula regulated educations

There is low mobility in several of the educations regulated by a national curriculum. The national requirements for facilitating student mobility apply to both higher education in general and the individual programmes of education through the

²⁶ The Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH) does not record other types of short overseas stays, such as fieldwork, laboratory work or other cooperation with academic communities in other countries.

²⁷ Regulations relating to the allocation of educational support for the academic year 2018–2019, section 5-1 *Partial studies abroad*.

Table 4.7 Mobility in selected programmes of professional study. Percentage of the 2019 graduates who had a learning period abroad during the course of their studies

	Graduates	Share with a mobility stay of 3 months or longer	Share with a mobility stay of less than 3 months
Health education (not master's) ¹	6 212	11.3%	3.7%
Teacher education and education science	7 048	7.6%	6.2%
Engineering programmes (not master's)	2 691	8.6%	0.3%

¹ The category “educational programmes in health sciences (not master's)” comprises people who completed a three-year bachelor's degree programme in the following programmes: Audiology, Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy, Health sciences, Radiology, Nursing, Dental hygiene, Social education (welfare nursing), Dental technician.

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

different national curricula. Nevertheless, we find the lowest mobility rates within the professional study programmes.

Many of the educational programmes where a national curriculum has been established have indicated in their consultation responses that it is demanding to facilitate student mobility, and especially mobility of at least three months' duration. National curricula have been set for teacher education, engineering education, and health and social care education. In the consultation responses to the white paper, it is mentioned that the educations regulated by a national curriculum are subject to strict national regulations in terms of both the content of the education and the graduates' learning outcomes. It is argued that, among other things, the amount of compulsory teaching, compulsory courses and compulsory supervised professional training make it challenging to facilitate student mobility. The structure of the study programmes is perceived as rigid, and it is claimed that it is difficult to make space for mobility windows. Several stakeholders point out further that it is hard to find courses at overseas institutions that are sufficiently similar to their own courses that they can replace the compulsory courses in the programme at home. The fact that there are few elective courses in the programme is also perceived as an obstacle to student mobility. Some educations, such as the undergraduate programme in social education (welfare nursing) and to a lesser degree also the programme for kindergarten teacher education, face the challenge that other countries do not have an equivalent education at the higher education level, rendering it difficult to find courses at foreign institutions that can be incorporated in the Norwegian degree.

The requirement from the Quality Reform that all higher education institutions must offer stu-

dents who wish to do so the opportunity to study abroad as part of their Norwegian degree programme applied to all study programmes and all subject areas. When revising the national curricula for the professional study programmes, requirements were included that arrangements must be made for student mobility and/or mobility windows must be introduced in the study programmes.²⁸ It appears that the institutions have not succeeded in facilitating student mobility in the professional study programmes to a sufficient degree.

For example, one in four students on the teacher education programme state that they find that a study or training period abroad is not relevant to their study programme.²⁹ Although this is not necessarily true, it is problematic that students on the teacher education programme have this impression. This suggests that during the course of the programme they must have encountered attitudes among the academic staff that international mobility is not relevant to teacher education. In order to succeed in bringing about a cultural change within the professional study programmes such that mobility becomes the norm, a positive attitude towards international mobility must be fostered within these programmes, and the students must encounter this attitude at all levels in the institution.

²⁸ Regulation no. 288 of 18 March 2013 on the National Curriculum for Teacher Education for Years 8–13, section 3: «The institutions shall also enable the students to take part of their education abroad and shall set conditions so that the students can have their stay approved as part of the programme of professional study and part of the teaching practice.»

Regulation no. 107 of 3 February 2011 on the National Curriculum for Engineering Education, section 3, fourth paragraph: «The institutions shall make it possible for the students to have an international semester and an international perspective in their education.»

²⁹ Statistics Norway – SSB (2018).

Although very many of the consultation responses mention challenges with international mobility in the educations regulated by a national curriculum, it must be queried whether the academic environments have themselves developed overly strict practices when assessing whether, and if so how, compulsory courses in the professional study programmes can be replaced by courses and/or periods of practical training taken abroad. This has also been expressed in the consultation responses from several institutions.

It is the institutions themselves and the individual academic communities that are responsible for ensuring that the students achieve the defined learning outcomes for the programme and meet the compulsory requirements. The institutions are free to incorporate courses taken abroad into the Norwegian degree. It is an important principle also for the regulated educations that courses taken abroad should be on the same level academically as the education at home, but it cannot be expected that courses taken abroad will be identical to the courses the student would otherwise have taken at home. The additional skills that the students acquire abroad must be weighed up against the fact that they will not have exactly the

same learning outcomes as they would if they had taken their entire education at home.

4.6.1.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to structure all their study programmes with clearly defined mobility windows, including the programmes that lead to professional qualifications.
- The Government expects the higher education institutions to use their academic freedom and the latitude afforded to them, and show great flexibility when recognising courses taken abroad, including in the educations regulated by a national curriculum.
- The Government wants to pave the way for the implementation of pilot projects to increase mobility in the educations regulated by a national curriculum.

4.6.2 Compulsory supervised professional training

Within the educations regulated by a national curriculum, enabling students to do all or part of

Box 4.4 NOTED

NOTED – *Norwegian Partnership Programme for International Teacher Education* – was established in 2017 as part of the follow-up to the strategy Raising teacher’s competence – Teaming up for a knowledge-based school, in connection with the introduction of a new five-year programme for primary and lower secondary teacher education.

The overarching goal of NOTED is to strengthen the quality of Norwegian teacher education and contribute to better schools. The programme aims to get more students and staff to go abroad on a mobility stay, including on training. The exchange shall take place within the framework of strategic partnerships between institutions in Norway and other countries.

There have been three calls for applications in NOTED: two in 2017 and one in 2019. A total of 23 projects have been granted funding. Of the 13 institutions that offer primary and lower secondary teacher education, 12 have been awarded funding for projects. There are no specific priority partner countries, but most of the projects have partners from English-speaking countries, pri-

marily the United Kingdom, New Zealand, North America and some African countries.

Although there is wide variation in the institutions’ approaches to internationalisation, the NOTED projects show that mobility is encouraged to a greater extent than previously in the study programmes at both bachelor’s and master’s level. Importance is attached to quality through the mobility stays being linked to academic cooperation between academic groups. The schools are more actively involved as partners, with a view to ensuring good training mobility.

The Status report on higher education in Norway 2020 shows an interesting and clear increase in the number of students with international mobility within teacher education. There may be several reasons for this, but there are grounds to believe that the increase is in part due to the fact that the NOTED programme has helped to put internationalisation higher on the agenda in primary and lower secondary teacher education.

their compulsory supervised professional training abroad represents an opportunity to encourage more students to go on a mobility stay abroad. The compulsory supervised professional training and the requirements regarding this are described in the national curriculum for the individual education. The training must be supervised and assessed, and it is an integral part of the programme of education. This also applies to compulsory supervised professional training taken abroad. In view of the various requirements regarding both the content and the structure of the supervised professional training, it can be challenging to arrange for this to be done overseas. In their consultation responses, the institutions state that it is very resource-intensive to be responsible for the academic content of practical training done outside Norway, and especially in the Global South. It requires well-planned

arrangements for supervised professional training and clear agreements with the partners and academic supervisors. Furthermore, it requires arrangements to ensure the students' safety and awareness concerning the individual student's intercultural capabilities.

Many of the consultation responses to the white paper refer to the fact that it is demanding to arrange a period of supervised professional training abroad of at least three months' duration. The periods of supervised professional training are often shorter than this, and it is pointed out that the requirement that the mobility must last at least three months for it to be counted in the mobility statistics and trigger performance-based funding in the funding system for universities and university colleges does not serve its intended purpose in connection with practical training. The periods of supervised professional training, as

Box 4.5 The course *Cultural understanding and comparative pedagogy* – in the preschool teacher education at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL)

Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) offers the course *Cultural understanding and comparative pedagogy* in the third year of its kindergarten teacher education. It is an elective course of 30 credits and includes a one-month study stay in China. The main focus of the course is Chinese kindergarten practices from a cultural historical perspective, and the aim of the programme is to contribute to an understanding of the correlations between kindergarten practices, culture and society, as well as to develop cultural understanding and multicultural competence.

The course is organised into three main blocks: 1) Introduction with academic preparation for the study period abroad; 2) a one-month study period in China for students and lecturers organised in partnership with the Beijing Institute of Education; and 3) follow-up work and examination at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL). Kindergartens in China and Norway are involved in a joint project through a dedicated kindergarten network that ensures teaching practice in local kindergartens. Since 2004, nearly 300 students have travelled to China under this scheme.

During the stay in China, the students receive teaching on topics such as Chinese kindergarten history and practices, attend semi-

nars with Chinese students, and experience local culture. In addition, there are workshops in Chinese languages, calligraphy, martial arts, dance and drama. The students visit a number of kindergartens and have several days' teaching practice in kindergartens. The stay is a fully integrated part of the course, and the students undergo thorough preparation ahead of the trip. Afterwards, the stay is processed, among other things through a theatrical performance for children and a written examination. Internationalisation not only takes place during the study period abroad, but is an integral part of the entire course. The lecturers also participate in the overseas exchange, providing them with good insight into the students' learning processes during their stay. The study period abroad has given the lecturers opportunities to develop contacts and cooperation with researchers in China, which has resulted in knowledge development and co-authoring, as well as the development of common courses at master's level with digital teaching methods.

The cooperation with China has also resulted in Chinese students coming to Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), and visiting Chinese students take courses taught in English at every level at HVL.

defined in the national curricula, are an integral part of the education and are regulated in the national curricula. The institutions point out that stays of four to eight weeks are of great academic benefit to the students, and in programmes with a lot of compulsory teaching, it may be easier to fit shorter periods abroad into the study programme and incorporate them into the degree at home. In

addition, going abroad on a shorter stay is an easier step for many students to take.

Although it is challenging, several institutions have successfully sent students on training abroad, including in the Global South. These institutions have prepared good systems and agreements to enable students to do all or part of their compulsory teaching practice abroad, and Norwe-

Box 4.6 The course *Clinical practice abroad* – bachelor's degree in Nursing – NTNU

The bachelor's programme in nursing at the Department of Public Health and Nursing at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) offers the course *Clinical practice abroad* (15 ECTS credits), which is a mobility course lasting a total of 12 weeks. The period abroad takes place in the sixth semester of the programme. During the clinical practice period, the students can also work on their bachelor's thesis, if there are courses related to clinical practice that are also relevant to the thesis. Globalisation has led to a new multicultural reality, also within health care. This must be reflected in the training programmes, by educating culturally competent nurses. The content of the course *Clinical practice abroad* is related to the topic international public health work, which looks at global health challenges, the global disease panorama, and health and disease from a cultural perspective. Exchanges are conducted in cooperation with universities in low- and middle-income countries, such as Nepal, Namibia, Nicaragua and Ghana. These are practice arenas that provide the students with knowledge and expertise that are useful for addressing shared global health challenges.

About 35 students per year go abroad, and these students must be highly motivated and confident self-starters. The students must apply to participate, and when selecting between the students, importance is attached to both academic performance and personal suitability. The course is very popular and receives more applications than there are places, meaning many suitable students are turned down.

The training programme consists of three phases:

Preparation course before travel

There is a two-day preparation course before departure. Some of the teaching is for the entire

group, and some is provided in groups for the respective countries where the students will do their practice. The purpose of the preparation course is to provide the students with cultural knowledge and understanding so that the clinical practice is perceived as meaningful and relevant in the process of building up their own professional competence.

Follow-up and academic supervision during the practice period

Academic supervision during the clinical practice is organised in cooperation with the contact person at the partner university. In addition, teachers from the programme in Norway supervise and advise the students on a weekly basis via video conference, and the purpose of these sessions is to reflect on the encounters the students have had during their practice, as well as to discuss any practical issues, as applicable. The students keep an individual learning log, and a course plan is drawn up detailing the expected learning outcomes. Self-assessment is one of several compulsory coursework requirements.

Homecoming seminar

After the period is completed, all the students meet for a homecoming seminar (one day). Here the students present their experiences from their clinical practice and other experiences. This seminar has two main purposes: firstly, they share their experiences from their clinical practice; and secondly, they are given the opportunity to discuss aspects they found challenging, personally or professionally.

gian institutions send students to a number of different countries. The feedback from the students is mostly very positive, and the students report that they learn a lot from this experience. For example, *Norwegian Teacher Student Union* (PS), the student association for students in teacher education, reports that teacher students give positive feedback, stating that by doing their teaching practice abroad, they get to see how their profession is practised in other countries, and that they have the opportunity to try working in different conditions than in Norway.³⁰ The principle that all teaching practice must be supervised and assessed is absolute, also if the teaching practice is done in another country, and the quality of the practice periods is essential for the quality of education.

4.6.2.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government holds that there is potential to make better use of the periods of practical training within the educations regulated by a national curriculum than is currently the case, and would encourage the institutions to take further steps to enable the students to do their compulsory supervised professional training abroad.
- The Government expects that inclusion of mobility stays of between one and three months in the performance-based indicator for student mobility in the funding system will lead to more students doing their compulsory supervised professional training in the programmes of professional study abroad (see section 4.5.3.1).

4.7 Other training mobility

Training mobility is the least prevalent form of student mobility, especially in disciplines that do not traditionally include a period of supervised professional training. In the education cooperation in Europe, there is a clear tendency towards efforts to make higher education more relevant to working life,³¹ cf. also the forthcoming white paper on labour market relevance in higher education. The white paper Report no. 16 to the Storting

(2016–2017) *Quality culture in higher education* highlights, among other things, the importance of supervised professional training in education. Training or work-related mobility refers to a variety of systems and schemes whereby students do a work placement in a workplace in another country.

The competence students receive through international student mobility in general and through work related mobility in particular is especially important when students are being educated to meet an increasingly globalised labour market. The goal of work placements is to bridge the gap between education and real-life work. They can help the students prepare for entry into the labour market, where intercultural and international perspectives are increasingly in demand.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that training mobility is demanding. One challenge is that Norwegian institutions do not always know how best to go about finding partners (i.e. work placement enterprises) abroad. Furthermore, it can be difficult to assess the period of practical training abroad, especially in countries where education, society and the labour market are organised very differently to in Norway. In addition, there are various practical challenges, such as getting visas, residence permits and insurance, which are often more complicated in connection with practical training than more traditional student exchanges. Since the students often do not benefit from the same infrastructure as ordinary exchange students, such as student accommodation, student transport, etc., it can also end up being expensive to do training in another country.

Several of the consultation responses to the white paper point out that the requirement for a minimum length of three months for an overseas learning period to be counted in the mobility statistics and trigger performance-based funding in the funding system for universities and university colleges is an obstacle, and that this threshold ought to be lowered. It is pointed out that overseas stays of between four and eight weeks are of great academic benefit to the students, and that students who have been on a short-term mobility period are generally more likely to go abroad again.

Although this kind of training mobility is relatively little used, and despite the fact that it is resource-intensive, there has been an increase in such mobility in recent years. Volda University College (HVO) can be highlighted as an example, where a relatively high number of students

³⁰ Input from the Pedagogstudentene (PS), the association for teacher students. Retrieved from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/invitasjon-til-a-komme-med-innspill-til-stortingsmeldingen-om-internasjonalt-studentmobilitet/id2611424/>.

³¹ Morley (2018).

Box 4.7 The course *Pedagogical work with children in an international perspective* – kindergarten teacher education at Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (DMMH)

The kindergarten teacher education programme at DMMH offers the specialisation course *Pedagogical work with children in an international perspective*. The course consists of a three-month overseas stay with 25 days' training in a local kindergarten. Students are recruited through information meetings, class visits and active use of social media. Meetings are also arranged where former exchange students share their experiences with potential new exchange students. All applicants for this specialisation course are interviewed before the final selection is made.

Needless to say, having been on a mobility stay abroad as part of a study programme does not in itself necessarily ensure the students acquire competencies that can be transferred to other situations. With a view to ensuring the students acquire intercultural competencies that are relevant to their profession, emphasis is placed on supporting students' learning both before, during and after the overseas stay. The students begin the semester at DMMH by preparing to encounter early childhood education and care practices in other countries. During the period abroad, the students have assignments related to their practical training and digital meetings with their academic supervisors at DMMH to ensure and maximise learning. When

the students return to DMMH, they process their experiences from the time spent abroad, among other things through joint reflections with fellow students on their experiences from their stays in another country. Joint teaching for outbound and inbound students also contributes to mutual learning and cultural exchange. DMMH cooperates with a number of higher education institutions on four continents, and these institutions provide access to early childhood education and care settings in their local community. The partnership builds on DMMH's long-standing international research and development work, and close cooperation between the international partners, lecturers and international offices is the key to the success of the exchange programme.

DMMH also has English-language opportunities for international students, including a period of supervised professional training in kindergartens in the Trondheim region. Building on their positive previous experiences with international students, the kindergartens provide practical training supervisors for international students each semester. The fact that DMMH can offer relevant kindergarten training to international students makes it easier to negotiate similar opportunities for DMMH's students at the overseas partner institutions.

choose to do their period of supervised professional training abroad. In autumn 2019, 34 per cent of the bachelor's students in social care programmes did a period of supervised professional training abroad. The university college has cooperation agreements with several countries, including India, Tanzania, Kenya, Greece and Ireland. While they are abroad, the students receive academic follow-up from the university college during their stay in the same way as the students doing training in Norway; for example, by the contact teacher visiting the students during the period of practical training. Having a training period in social work in another country provides the students with valuable insight into how the profession is practised in other countries and cultures.

One of the most common methods Norwegian higher education institutions employ to establish agreements on training abroad is to use their contacts and networks at partner institutions. Cooperation agreements between institutions often open doors to both education and local employers and businesses. In their input to the white paper, several universities and university colleges report that they use their partner networks and cooperation agreements to find overseas opportunities for their students. Others state that they use international alumni networks, and that they work systematically to motivate students to travel through buddy schemes, business contacts or experience sharing from students who have already participated in training abroad.

Within Europe, Germany and France are priority partner countries within both academia and industry. Moreover, Norwegian students are more likely to have a successful training period in these countries, since the cultural differences are relatively small. The circumstances for cooperation on such mobility vary greatly in Norway's priority partner countries outside Europe. Factors that might make establishing and ensuring assessment of training periods more demanding in many of the Panorama countries, for example, include language and cultural differences, no tradition of this training as envisaged by Norway, and different views on the role of students.

4.7.1 Scope of training mobility

As mentioned above, professional training mobility is a relatively little used instrument in higher

education. Table 4.8 presents figures from three different courses of education: a first-cycle or undergraduate degree (bachelor's degree), a second-cycle higher degree (master's degree) and an integrated master's degree (including professional study programmes at higher degree level), providing a general overview of the trends in terms of the scope of training mobility in the period 2016–2019, and the scope of exchanges of longer than three months.

The table shows that training mobility is increasing, but was still not widely used in the period 2016–2019. Training mobility is more prevalent at the first-cycle degree level than at the second-cycle degree level and in integrated study programmes. Training mobility is also a very much less used instrument than conventional study exchange abroad, as is demonstrated clearly in table 4.8.

Table 4.8 The total number of graduates and the number of graduates who have been on a learning period abroad of 3 months or longer, a learning period abroad of less than 3 months, or an overseas training period during the course of their studies. Distributed by level of education 2016–2019

Type of education	Total graduates	Graduates with a mobility stay of at least 3 months	Graduates with overseas training period
<i>2016</i>	<i>44 600</i>	<i>6 911</i>	<i>489</i>
First-cycle degree level	28 815	3 520	456
Second-cycle degree level	11 578	2 014	30
Integrated master's degree / professional study	4 207	1 377	3
<i>2017</i>	<i>46 404</i>	<i>7 225</i>	<i>556</i>
First-cycle degree level	30 715	3 731	502
Second-cycle degree level	11 357	2 029	54
Integrated master's degree / professional study	4 332	1 465	0
<i>2018</i>	<i>47 336</i>	<i>7 706</i>	<i>569</i>
First-cycle degree level	31 428	4 046	484
Second-cycle degree level	11 668	2 164	76
Integrated master's degree / professional study	4 240	1 496	9
<i>2019</i>	<i>48 333</i>	<i>7 892</i>	<i>751</i>
First-cycle degree level	31 853	3 878	632
Second-cycle degree level	12 026	2 365	93
Integrated master's degree / professional study	4 454	1 649	26
<i>Total</i>	<i>186 673</i>	<i>29 734</i>	<i>2 365</i>

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

Table 4.9 Training mobility from Nordic countries through Erasmus+, under the 2017 call for applications

	Number
Denmark	1 464
Finland	1 322
Sweden	959
Norway	320
Iceland	124

Source: Erasmus+ 2018 Annual Report Statistical Annex, Annex 15

There has been an increase in the number of Norwegian students who do a training period abroad in recent years. However, the other Nordic countries have significantly higher such mobility than Norway (cf. table 4.9). Denmark and Finland are well ahead of Norway, whereas the figures for Sweden are only marginally higher. There is thus great potential for growth in the use of international training mobility from Norway.

4.7.2 What instruments are available?

Norwegian higher education institutions can use opportunities that follow from the EU cooperation to offer international training mobility.

In the current Erasmus+ programme period, degree students (at bachelor's, master's and PhD level) can go abroad on training periods lasting between two and twelve months. Erasmus+ encompasses both inter-European and global training mobility.³² The premise is that such mobility must be based on institutional cooperation agreements and result in assessed learning outcomes for the students. A learning agreement must be entered into between the home institution, the recipient organisation and the student.³³ This agreement must describe, among other things, the student's tasks, the expected learning outcomes, follow-up and plans for evaluation. For students who do a period of practical training in Europe, there is also the option of doing this

period of practical training after they have completed their degree.

Some Norwegian institutions employ framework agreements other than Erasmus+. Several of the institutions with high figures for training mobility use national instruments, primarily the *InternAbroad* programme, which is currently in the pilot phase (see the more detailed presentation in box 4.7).

It is up to the home institution to decide whether or not the training period provides credits and how the student can have the stay approved and incorporated into their study programme. A formal learning agreement in Erasmus+ triggers funding through the programme, and work-related mobility have better financial conditions than overseas study stays.³⁴ All higher education institutions that have been awarded the *Erasmus Charter for Higher Education* (ECHE)³⁵ can apply for funding.

A recent analysis, *Erasmus+ in Norwegian Higher Education 2019*, reveals an increase in student mobility, but also points out that there are untapped opportunities, especially in respect of international training mobility.³⁶ Of the 2,684 outbound students under the Erasmus+ programme in 2017, only 320 went abroad to have a training period. There is wide variance in the use of this scheme among Norwegian institutions. In 2017, for example, six institutions accounted for 70 per cent of all such mobility³⁷, while six others³⁸ did not employ this scheme at all. The figures show that the most popular destination countries for training mobility in Europe among Norwegian students are Germany, the United Kingdom and Spain. Since training mobility as part of the "global mobility" initiative³⁹ was only introduced

³⁴ Student on European mobility receive an extra EUR 200 per month in addition to the ordinary grant (since 2019).

³⁵ More information about ECHE can be found at: <https://diku.no/programmer/erasmus-charter-for-higher-education-eche>.

³⁶ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019i), p. 4.

³⁷ The NHH Norwegian School of Economics, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (HiNN), University of Oslo (UiO), Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet), the University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway (UiT) and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

³⁸ Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (DMMH), Lovisenberg Diaconal University College (LDH), the Norwegian University College of Dance (NDH), Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO), the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH), and the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH)

³⁹ <https://diku.no/programmer/erasmus-global-mobilitet-i-hoeyere-utdanning>.

³² Programme countries, mainly the EU/EEA. Read more about the programme countries and partner countries here: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/who-can-take-part_en.

³³ There are separate rules for stays outside Europe.

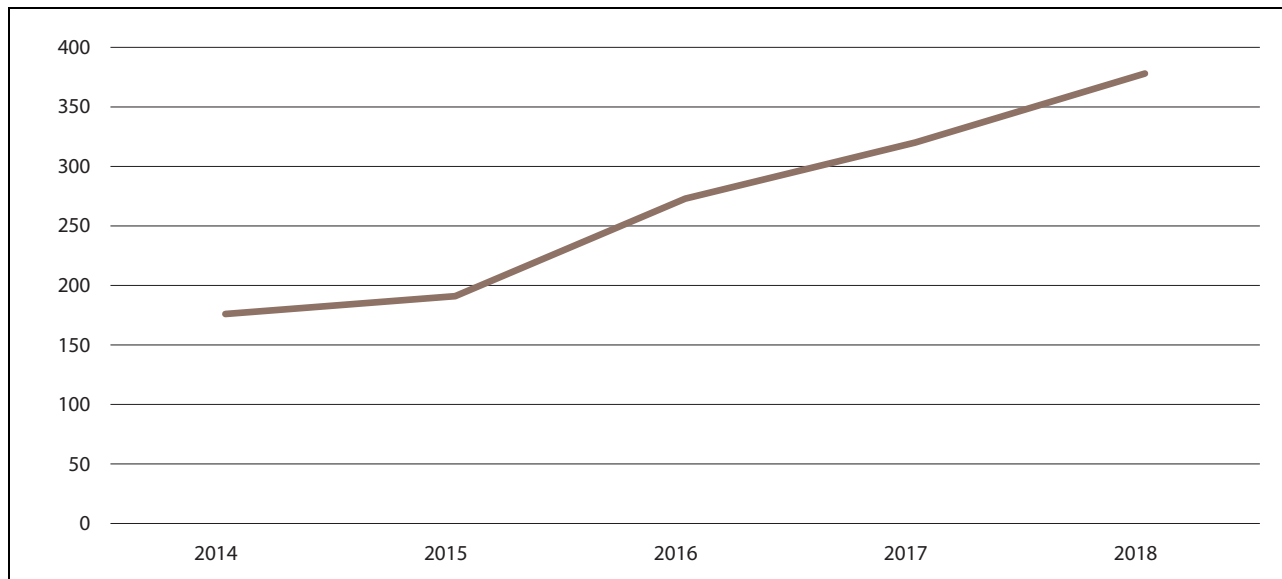


Figure 4.1 Training mobility in Europe 2014–2017

Source: Erasmus+, Final Reports – Mobility for students and staff to partner countries

in 2018, most of the available figures only apply to countries in Europe.

All students who go abroad within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme must answer a questionnaire on their return, evaluating the quality of their stay. They are asked to express their views on the relevance of the mobility stay, how satisfied they were with their stay, their learning outcomes, and various other aspects. All institutions have access to own results. This feedback from the students can provide an important indication of the quality and relevance of the overseas stays.

4.7.2.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government wants the institutions to pave the way for better international training mobility through active use of schemes such as Erasmus+ (assuming Norway participates in the programme in the period 2021–2027) and *InternAbroad*.
- The Government expects that inclusion of mobility stays of between one and three months in the performance-based indicator for student mobility in the funding system for universities and university colleges will lead to more students doing training periods abroad.

4.8 Information

Providing better information to students and prospective students is a key element in the work to

increase student mobility in higher education in Norway. In the consultation input to the work on the white paper, the students in particular have expressed that the information needs to be improved. The information is perceived as unclear, difficult to find, fragmented and at times also inadequate. This is also in line with other knowledge about factors that inhibit students' participation in exchange programmes.⁴⁰

Today, responsibility for providing information is shared. Most of the information work is the responsibility of and done by the individual institutions, whereas the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) provides public, quality assured information about different countries of study through the website *Utdanning i verden [Education in the world]*, which has links to the individual Norwegian institutions' mobility pages. Diku also operates *Study in Norway*, which is an information website for inbound students. Through its work, Diku aims to inspire, motivate and advise students, including considering whether, for example, special campaigns are needed to recruit students to priority partner countries. Another source of information is the website *Utdanning.no*, run by Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning (Kompetanse Norge), which is the national online portal with an overview of all the education on offer in Norway and includes information about education and careers.

⁴⁰ Cf. section 4.1 on obstacles to students going abroad.

Box 4.8 Training mobility through the *InternAbroad* scheme

InternAbroad is a pilot programme, and the first 16 *InternAbroad* projects started up in spring 2018. The project portfolio has evolved from initially mainly including business and management subjects to embracing a far wider range of disciplines.

The scheme was originally designed for 130 students during the project period 2018–2020. Of these, some 40 per cent were bachelor's level students and roughly 60 per cent were master's level students.

The internship must be conducted in one of the BRICS countries,¹ USA, Canada or Japan.

It is a requirement that the internship must provide a minimum of 7.5 ECTS credits. It is also a requirement that it is of at least two months' duration if the student is only doing practical training abroad, and of at least four weeks' duration if the practical training is combined with the student taking courses at an overseas partner institution.

If the combination model is selected, it is also a requirement that the total stay must be of at least three months' duration. For both types, it is a requirement that the stay is organised in such a way that the students do not fall behind schedule in their studies.

Through *InternAbroad*, Norwegian higher education institutions can receive funding to develop schemes whereby Norwegian students can do their practical training abroad and receive credits for it that are fully integrated into the programme description at the home institution.

The internship workplaces can be in Norwegian companies that have offices abroad or in foreign workplaces that have an interest in learning more about Norway. Many of the projects expanded their portfolio of companies in 2018, enabling them to send more students abroad in the future. Close follow-up and complementary networking activities are necessary for *InternAbroad* to succeed in countries with a very different sociocultural context to Norway's.

The nine new *InternAbroad* projects, which started up in 2019, have spent much of their first year working to develop and have approved new programme descriptions or revising existing systems. The projects have also spent time entering into contracts with the companies and translating them into the local language(s), and preparing guides for students, covering issues such as safety, insurance, visas, etc.

Experience from *InternAbroad* suggests that the major differences between the countries mean that both the objectives for and the organisation of the cooperation will vary from country to country. It is therefore important to identify and take into account the various opportunities and challenges in the different countries.

Feedback from *InternAbroad* shows that the periods spent abroad provide the students with valuable learning opportunities that should be further exploited and that the students who have been abroad report that they have benefited from the internship.

¹ Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

It is essential that prospective students are given good information about the opportunities for studying abroad as early as possible. This will help prepare them for and make them aware of the possibilities for a study or training period abroad before they even embark on higher education.

Many students consult the *Utdanning.no* website on their way into higher education. More information about opportunities to study abroad on *Utdanning.no* will enable prospective students to gain more knowledge about and greater awareness of international mobility even before they start at a university or university college.

4.8.1 Conclusions and measures

- The website *Utdanning.no* ought to highlight to a larger extent the opportunities available to Norwegian students to study abroad both as degree students and as exchange students. The work to ensure good communication with all Norwegian students must be carried out in collaboration with other relevant actors, such as the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) and the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen).

4.9 Digital solutions for administration of student mobility

A major change in culture where international student mobility is an integral part of all study programmes, requires good systems, and especially digital systems. This applies in particular in connection with systems for handling applications for and approval of mobility stays, but also with regard to information in general. All new systems

must be student centric, and the Government wants eventually to establish a common digital portal that handles all aspects of international student mobility – before, during and after the study period or training abroad. This is supported and highlighted as important by all the institutions that have provided consultation input to the white paper. In their consultation responses, many parties argue that the processes linked to student mobility need to be simplified and made less

Box 4.9 University of Stavanger – Interactive map with information on mobility opportunities

The University of Stavanger (UiS) has put a lot of effort into improving and quality assuring the information about mobility on its responsive websites. This is part of the work on following up UiS's development agreement with the Ministry of Education and Research.

One of the innovations is a map solution with information about international mobility, which was launched in November 2019. In the new interactive map solution, students can search for their study programme and then see where in the world they can go on an exchange.

The students can also use the map to get more information about each of the recommended overseas institutions and to find more detailed information about the opportunities and schemes for international mobility in the relevant study programme.

All the information in the interactive map on recommended overseas institutions and mobility schemes in the relevant study programme is taken from the *National Student Database* (FS).

This solution has two clear advantages:

1. The information about mobility opportunities is easier to access by students being able to search for their study programme and have the mobility opportunities presented visually.
2. Having all the information in a single database facilitates and improves quality assurance. The University of Stavanger uses the National Student Database (FS) as a tool for storing and publishing all other information about academic matters, and it is directly linked to the annual review of courses and course descriptions. Incorporating all information about mobility into FS also serves to increase the study programmes' support for and ownership of the information and the exchange schemes.

Easily accessible, quality assured, online information about exchange options is expected to yield results in the long run in the form of increased student mobility.

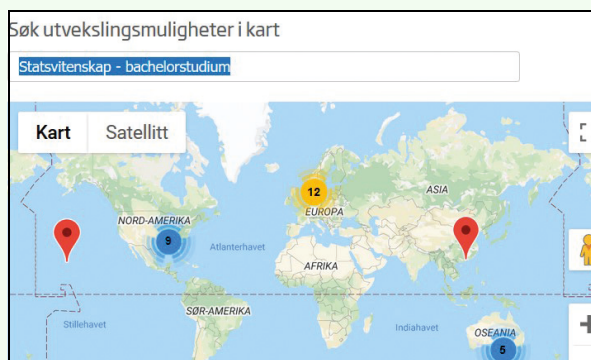


Figure 4.2 Examples from the University of Stavanger's map solution

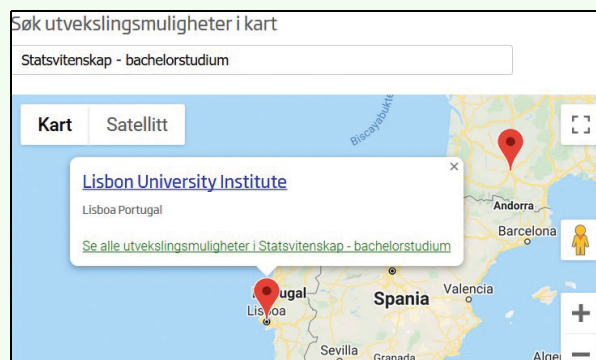


Figure 4.3 Examples from the University of Stavanger's map solution

Source: <https://student.uis.no/utveksling/hvor-og-naar-kan-jeg-reise/>

bureaucratic, enabling more efficient administrative work related to student mobility. One recurring point is digitalisation of various aspects of the process, especially the application and approval routines. The University of Bergen (UiB) expresses the future ambitions aptly:

“We want a process where every step a student must take ahead of an overseas stay is gathered in a single digital solution. Everything from the choice of exchange agreement, automatic pre-approval of the stay, and not least the application to the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund. Once a student chooses a place of study, an application ought to be automatically sent to the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund.”⁴¹

The Government wants to improve the users' interaction with the public administration, and one aim expressed in the white paper Report no. 27 to the Storting (2015–2016) *Digital agenda for Norway – ICT for a simpler everyday life and increased productivity* is that users shall perceive public services as seamless and integrated. This also applies to the education and research sector. In spring 2019, the Ministry of Education and Research therefore appointed an expert working group to look into the service chains in the education and research sector, with representatives from the Ministry's nine subordinate agencies.⁴²

The expert group was initiated by the Directorate for ICT and Joint Services in Higher Education and Research (Unit) and has representatives from the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), universities and university colleges, the Directorate of Education and partners in the *Erasmus Without Papers* project. The group has now developed a problem description and a number of recommended measures. The project is in its infancy, but aims to digitalise the administrative aspects of student mobility, such as

- the application process
- information for students
- the portfolio of foreign partner institutions
- the learning agreement

⁴¹ Consultation response from the University of Bergen (UiB). Retrieved from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/invitasjon-til-a-komme-med-innspill-til-storingsmeldingen-om-internasjonalt-studentmobilitet/id2611424/>.

⁴² Ministry of Education and Research (2019).

- learning outcome descriptors
- documents in connection with preliminary pre-approval of courses

Digitalisation shall also enable individual decisions to be sent directly to the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånkassen) and quicker submission of examination results, etc.

The purpose of digitalisation is not only to simplify and streamline processes, but also to free up time for academic follow-up of the students.

4.9.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government will work to simplify the application and approval processes related to student mobility for students and institutions.

4.10 Responsibility for Norwegian students abroad in the event of unforeseen incidents

If increased student mobility is achieved in line with the ambitions, there will be more Norwegian students at higher education institutions abroad, including at institutions in countries with a different risk profile to Norway. Increased student mobility thus entails an increased risk of Norwegian students being affected by unforeseen incidents, such as natural disasters, accidents, pandemics, terrorism, crime, national unrest, violent demonstrations, hostilities, war, etc. The Norwegian Foreign Service is responsible for assisting Norwegian citizens abroad in the event of unforeseen incidents. The Ministry of Education and Research's responsibility is to assist the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with information about Norwegian students abroad and to coordinate the information communicated to state and private higher education institutions that have exchange students abroad. The individual student must decide for themselves whether it is pertinent and sensible to choose to study abroad, taking the risk of unforeseen incidents into consideration. In addition, Norwegian higher education institutions have a duty to assess the risk of unforeseen incidents in connection with their international exchange programmes.

The institutions have a clear responsibility to inform and advise students about both the opportunities and the limitations in advance of their trip abroad. In addition, the institutions must make it clear what the students are themselves responsible for. As a general starting point, the institutions

do not have a financial responsibility for students who are on an exchange in another country; however, in the event of e.g. a disrupted learning period abroad, the institutions are responsible for ensuring the student's study progress.

Students who receive support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) for a study period abroad are automatically a member of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme while they are overseas. However, the extent to which an individual student is entitled to occupational injury compensation or compensation pursuant to general rules of the law of damages will vary from case to case. Norwegian students abroad should therefore arrange their own private insurance for their learning period abroad and familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of the policy.

4.10.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to assess and take into account the security risks of sending Norwegian students abroad on a case-by-case basis.
- The institutions have a clear responsibility to inform and advise the students on both the

opportunities and the limitations in advance of their trip abroad, and to make it clear what the students themselves are responsible for.

4.11 An international study programme

Studies abroad must be seen in conjunction with other activities to promote internationalisation and quality development at the institutions. This is especially pertinent in view of the Government's aim to instigate a cultural change where mobility and international perspectives are an integral part of all programmes. Even if student mobility increases significantly going forwards, a large proportion of Norwegian students will still not have this kind of international experience during the course of their studies. It is therefore important that all study programmes develop a more international profile.

There is no overall knowledge about how and to what extent the study programmes at Norwegian higher education institutions have an international dimension. In 2018, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) and the Research Council of Norway (NFR) presented a joint evaluation of research and education in

Box 4.10 Nordic and International Perspectives on Teaching and Learning – Nord University

Nordic and International Perspectives on Teaching and Learning is a 30 ECTS credit elective course taught in English for students on Nord University's teacher education programme for primary and lower secondary teachers and kindergarten teachers at the Levanger campus. The same course is also offered to international students who are on similar educational programmes at their home institution, and the inbound students come mainly from partner institutions in Erasmus+ and North2North.

In this course, students seek to broaden their perspectives on teaching and learning in kindergarten and school, with a focus on nature as a learning arena. The students develop and challenge their own attitudes and values in respect of nature, culture and the purpose of education. Knowledge about the interplay between humans, nature and culture creates understanding among students about the importance of education for sustainable development.

Halfway through the semester, the Norwegian students go on a four-week training period abroad where they get to know a different culture, a different education system and a different pedagogical philosophy. At the same time, inbound exchange students do work placements in Norwegian schools and kindergartens. During the semester, opportunities to meet other students training to become a kindergarten and/or primary and lower secondary teacher are arranged, including in connection with reflection seminars after the training period. The course gives local students, who for various reasons cannot or do not wish to travel abroad on a semester exchange, the opportunity to be actively involved in an international learning environment at the institution. In autumn 2019, Nord University received inbound exchange students from Germany, Spain, Czech Republic, Belgium, Switzerland, Russia, Turkmenistan, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

selected academic areas at various institutions.⁴³ The internationalisation of the study programmes was one of the aspects that was assessed. The assessment showed that there are large differences between the various educational opportunities, at the same time as a number of common challenges were identified. Internationalisation of study programmes depends on the academic community having an international orientation and international contact. However, this is not always enough. The joint evaluation shows that even academic and research groups with a highly international orientation do not always manage to create a correspondingly international profile in the study programmes they offer.

On an overarching level, the evaluation shows that different academic communities and institutions have different perceptions of what internationalisation means, and that some people assume internationalisation simply means international mobility. More specifically, the reports highlight that many of the programmes ought to develop a more international profile by adopting a more international syllabus and making greater use of examples and contexts from countries other than Norway. At the same time, the reports point out that some groups already do this systematically and to a high degree.

The evaluation also recommends greater use of international teachers, stressing that this represents an important and underused potential for internationalisation. These may be the institutions' own teachers, part-time employees, or international partners who can add an international perspective.

A recent study from Finland shows that there is relatively little knowledge and understanding of the concept of “internationalisation at home” among the academic staff in the Finnish higher education sector.⁴⁴ In their evaluation, NOKUT and the Research Council of Norway find that the situation in Norway is more complex and varied. As with mobility and exchange, this type of internationalisation initiative must also be adapted to the individual programmes. It is nevertheless important that all study programmes assess how an international dimension can strengthen the education they provide and what needs to be done to achieve this.

Norwegian higher education institutions on the mainland ought to take greater advantage of

the unique study and research environment in polar and natural sciences at the University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS), also in connection with student mobility.

4.11.1 Digital international cooperation and exchanges without physical mobility

Technological advances in digitalisation and more online communication are opening up new and improving pre-existing opportunities for international collaboration without the need to meet in person.

The advantage of using technology to add an international dimension to Norwegian education is that all the students can participate, irrespective of factors that might prevent them from travelling physically – such as family commitments, health, and financial and/or work situation. Technology thus provides good alternative opportunities for internationalisation at home.

One drawback is that some of the positive effects that physical mobility can have are lost; for example, benefits related to general skills, personal development, and general moral, social and cultural education. Digital technology and virtual cooperation ought therefore not to be used instead of traditional physical mobility, but rather be a supplement to it and to help motivate physical mobility. Although virtual cooperation and mobility ought to be in addition to physical mobility, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered strong growth in the use of digital solutions in higher education, thereby also lowering the threshold for the use of virtual solutions in connection with internationalisation and mobility.

Some academic communities argue that the amount of compulsory teaching and compulsory courses, as defined in national curricula, for example, make it difficult to accommodate study or training period abroad. Virtual international cooperation, combined with short-term mobility, may function as a supplement and an alternative to a mobility period of over three months where this is challenging to arrange.

Another aspect of virtual and/or digital cooperation that some institutions highlight in their consultation responses to the white paper is that it represents a solution to how to meet the potentially contradictory goals of increased physical mobility and the green transition. From a sustainability perspective, digital international cooperation provides an environment-friendly alternative to long-haul flights.

⁴³ Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2018a).

⁴⁴ Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (2019), p. 21.

Box 4.11 COIL

Collaborative: peer to peer experiential learning with a focus on working together (team skills).

Online: learning how to work in a remote team and manage virtual tools in a professional manner.

International: cross cultural learning by bringing the world into your classroom, offering non-mobile students an international experience.

Learning: enhancing existing curriculum with virtual collaboration and learning from peers around the world.

Source: Eva Haug, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences.

Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) collaborates closely with Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences and The Hague University of Applied Sciences on a virtual exchange solution called COIL. COIL stands for Collaborative Online International Learning and is a form of virtual international cooperation and exchange (see the more detailed presentation in box 4.11). The focus here is on the learning element for students and on reaching students who would not otherwise be mobile for various reasons. Although the Government holds that virtual cooperation should not replace actual or physical mobility, virtual international cooperation has an independent intrinsic value of its own.

Internationally, there is no general consensus on whether to call this kind of virtual international

cooperation “virtual mobility”, “virtual exchange” or, for example, “global network learning”. The European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) points out that in the call for the 2019 Erasmus+ work programme, the European Commission defined virtual mobility as follows: “a set of activities supported by Information and Communication Technologies, including e-learning, that realise or facilitate international, collaborative experiences in a context of teaching, training or learning.”⁴⁵ At the time of writing, it is not clear what definition the European Commission will use in the next programme phase of Erasmus+.

However, there is widespread consensus that it is not the technology itself that is the most important element, but what the technology can enable in terms of learning across national borders and development of intercultural skills and understanding.

The European Commission’s new *European Universities* initiative (see section 4.3.5) also emphasises virtual international cooperation as an important instrument.

4.11.2 Conclusions and measures

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to incorporate an international dimension adapted to the individual programme in all the study programmes, and that they also facilitate internationalisation for students who do not travel abroad for a study or training period. The Government expects the higher education institutions to consider how they can accommodate virtual forms of international cooperation in their study programmes.

⁴⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/book/export/html/379_en.

5 Inbound exchange students

5.1 More students out, more students in

Through the Bologna Process, Norway has committed to ensuring that by 2020, at least 20 per cent of students will have had a study period or practical training abroad. In the longer term, the Government wants to increase this share to 50 per cent. The target set in the Bologna Process applies to outbound students; no similar target has been set for the proportion of inbound students – at the European level or in Norway. Although no target has been set for the number of inbound students, the basic idea behind student exchange is that there should be approximate balance in the number of inbound and outbound students, hence the term “exchange”. This means that the basic point of departure is that there should be roughly an equal number of inbound and outbound students at an institution. In other words, international cooperation must be based on reciprocity. The fact that the Government is now setting a target that 50 per cent of Norwegian students will have a learning period abroad during the course of their studies entails that Norway must also be prepared to accept more international exchange students, with a view to ensuring reciprocity.

However, there is an indisputable east-to-west imbalance in student mobility within Europe, and in connection with the Bologna Process, the partner countries have agreed to work to achieve a better geographical balance in student mobility.¹ There is currently a clear tendency that some countries in Europe – primarily the United Kingdom, Denmark and the Netherlands – receive far

more international students than they send abroad. Other countries are experiencing the inverse: they send out many students, but receive very few. This is especially true of countries in the Balkans, such as Moldova, Croatia and Albania, and Azerbaijan and Andorra.² In this context, Norway belongs to the category of countries that send out significantly more students than they receive. It is worth noting that these figures also include degree students, i.e. students who take a full degree in another country. For Norway, the imbalance in these figures is due to the fact that significantly more Norwegian degree students choose to go abroad to study, compared with the number of international degree students who come to Norway – approximately 16,000 outbound degree students against approximately 12,300 inbound.³

By contrast, if we look only at exchange students and do not include full-degree students, a very different picture emerges. According to the figures in *Status report on higher education in Norway 2020*, there were approximately 7,400 Norwegian exchange students abroad in 2019, compared with just over 8,700 inbound exchange students.⁴ In other words, there was a clear preponderance of inbound exchange students to Norway in 2019.

Many countries have a proactive policy to attract international students, and to this end make use of promotional campaigns, dedicated websites, the foreign service and students who have previously been exchange students in the

² European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2018), chapter 7.

³ Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund and Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2020b)

⁴ Ibid.

¹ The Bologna Process (2012 a).

Table 5.1 Inbound exchange students to Norway, 2010–2019. Numbers

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number	5 711	5 906	6 375	6 583	6 935	7 666	8 478	8 683	8 950	8 767

Students who had a study or training period abroad under an individual exchange agreement are not included.

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

Table 5.2 Inbound exchange students to Norway in the period 2016–2019 by type of agreement

Exchange agreement	2016	2017	2018	2019
Erasmus+	5 977	6 392	6 658	6 724
Bilateral agreements	1 433	1 473	1 610	1 486
Nordplus	238	254	262	204
Other agreements	830	564	420	353
Total	8 478	8 683	8 950	8 767

Students who had a study or training period abroad under an individual exchange agreement are not included.

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

country but have now returned home, to increase the number of inbound students.⁵ Some of the campaigns are primarily aimed at attracting inbound degree students, whereas Germany's "Study in Germany – land of ideas" campaign, for example, also targets students who also want to take only part of their degree in Germany. The

Netherlands has also adopted a clear strategy to attract more international students through the "Make it in the Netherlands" and "Study in Holland" campaigns, as has Sweden through the "Study in Sweden" website and its active use of the *Swedish Institute*.⁶

⁵ Germany has the «Study in Germany – land of ideas» campaign (<https://www.study-in-germany.de/en>).

⁶ <https://www.studyinholland.nl/> and <https://studyinsweden.se/>.

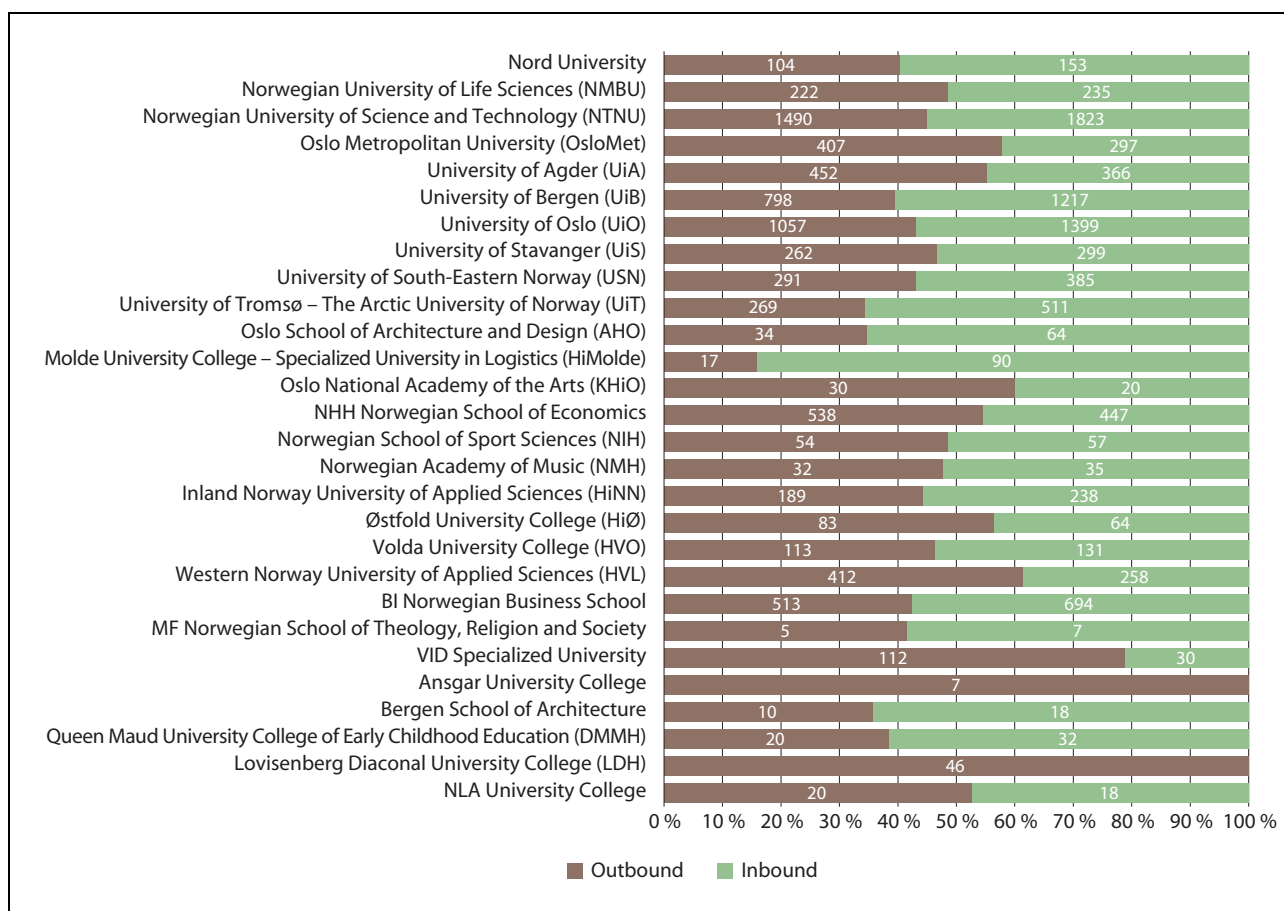


Figure 5.1 Ratio between inbound and outbound students at Norwegian universities and university colleges
Institutions with three or fewer inbound and/or outbound students have been excluded for data protection reasons.

A target that 50 per cent of Norwegian students will have a learning period abroad puts the question of balance in the number of inbound and outbound students on the agenda. If 50 per cent of Norwegian students are to go abroad for study or training period, it will be important to attract more international students in order to maintain some degree of balance in the exchange. Several parties that have submitted input to the white paper refer to the importance of reciprocity in student mobility, and they ask precisely what consequences of an increase in the number of outbound students of this magnitude will have for the institutions, especially financially, unless the number of inbound students also increases accordingly. For example, Universities Norway (UHR) writes in its consultation response that a goal that half of students should spend time abroad ought to be matched with a corresponding goal of welcoming an equal number of international students to Norway.⁷

Reciprocity and balance in student mobility is also a central part of institutional partnerships and an important element in international cooperation programmes like UTFORSK.⁸ A preliminary report on student mobility between Norway and the Panorama countries shows that overall the UTFORSK programme has managed to achieve a very good balance in mobility between Norway and the Panorama countries, albeit with differences between the individual countries.⁹ This demonstrates that balance in student mobility can be achieved through programmes like UTFORSK.

With a target of ensuring that 50 per cent of Norwegian students have an overseas stay during the course of their studies, Norwegian higher education institutions must be ready to receive and work actively to attract inbound exchange students. Many Norwegian institutions work well to attract foreign exchange students, but there are major differences between the institutions, and some institutions have no inbound exchange students at all.

Although the institutions work systematically to attract exchange students, it seems unlikely that complete balance in student mobility will be achieved, and few countries have therefore set a target for the number of inbound exchange students. The Government does not want to set a

specific target for the number of inbound exchange students to Norway; rather it wants Norwegian higher education institutions to continue to work systematically to attract foreign students.

5.1.1 Conclusions and measures

The Government wants Norwegian higher education institutions to continue to work systematically to attract more international exchange students, both through their cooperation agreements with overseas universities and through programmes such as Erasmus+ (assuming Norway participates in the period 2021–2027), Nordplus, UTFORSK and Diku's quality programmes.

5.2 Factors cited by students for their choice of Norway as a country of study

There are various reasons why international students choose Norway as a country of study. The Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) regularly conducts a survey among international students in Norway about their reasons for choosing Norway as a country of study, and their expectations and their experiences of studying in Norway.¹⁰ The 2016 report shows that study programmes in English is the most important factor in international students choosing Norway as a country of study, followed by factors linked to Norway as a nation, such as Norwegian nature and unspoiled landscapes.¹¹ The survey also reveals that more students choose Norway as a country of study because of aspects linked to education, as opposed to aspects linked to Norway as a nation, such as nature. However, the study also shows that it is the combination of these factors that is decisive. These are interesting and important findings in terms of what elements higher education institutions ought to emphasise in their work to recruit students. The survey includes both full-degree and exchange students, but more than 60 per cent of the respondents were exchange students.

⁷ Input to the white paper from Universities Norway (UHR). Retrieved from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/invitasjon-til-a-komme-med-innspill-til-stortingsmeldingen-om-internasjonalt-studentmobilitet/id2611424/>.

⁸ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019).

⁹ Ideas2Evidence & Oxford Research (2019).

¹⁰ The survey was previously conducted by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU).

¹¹ Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education – SIU (2016b).

Table 5.3 Inbound exchange students 2010–2019. The ten largest sender countries in 2019. Ranked by the highest number in 2019

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Germany	954	1 018	1 122	1 163	1 239	1 410	1 538	1 678	1 685	1 837
France	607	724	774	758	846	896	1 071	1 161	1 243	1 185
The Netherlands	291	279	316	312	319	471	558	624	667	689
Italy	261	286	250	285	320	367	427	443	573	586
Spain	427	500	545	579	520	482	573	586	613	580
Belgium	107	97	145	137	152	193	227	270	238	259
USA	189	215	197	186	174	229	296	315	304	258
Denmark	120	131	145	172	240	245	252	302	279	242
United Kingdom	116	96	171	152	153	152	209	215	235	229
Austria	148	158	147	177	157	208	202	229	212	219
Other	2 491	2 402	2 563	2 662	2 815	3 013	3 125	2 860	2 901	2 683
Total	5 711	5 906	6 375	6 583	6 935	7 666	8 478	8 683	8 950	8 767

The table shows the total number of inbound exchange students on an annual basis, not including inbound students with an individual agreement and organised research training programmes.

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

In the 2019 survey, only 43 per cent of the respondents were exchange students, but the results largely mirror those from previous surveys: The quality of the education and study programmes taught in English, in addition to Norwegian nature, are cited as the main motivations for choosing to study in Norway, along with the fact that Norway is a safe, peaceful country.¹² In the 2019 survey, Norwegian nature is ranked higher than the quality of the education as a motivational factor for exchange students. As regards what determines choice of institution, 73 per cent of the exchange students report that it is important that the Norwegian institution has an institutional agreement with their home institution, followed by the possibility of studying a particular subject, and the quality of the education.

In both surveys, the students state that the internet is their main source of information about Norway as a country of study, followed by the institutions' own websites, and academic and administrative staff at their home institution. In the 2019 survey, the exchange students also cite

other students as an important source of information. The website *Study in Norway* is primarily a source of information for degree students, as opposed to exchange students. This is only natural since most of the content on this website is information about entire study programmes taught in English at Norwegian institutions, with only limited information about individual courses taught in English and opportunities for exchange in Norway. There is no general website with information about exchange opportunities in Norway, as this is largely organised by the individual institutions themselves.

5.2.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government will consider whether Diku ought to be given a more clearly defined role in coordinating and managing information for inbound exchange students to make the information better and more accessible to these students. In connection with this, it may also be appropriate to commission Diku to act as an adviser on recruitment measures aimed at this group.

¹² Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019g).

5.3 International exchange students in the Norwegian study environment

The white paper Report no. 16 to the Storting (2016–2017) *Quality culture in higher education* set a goal that students in Norwegian higher education ought to be in a learning environment that also includes international students. Even if the number of Norwegian students who go abroad for study or training period increases significantly in the future, this goal can only be achieved if the Norwegian students who do not have the opportunity to go abroad meet and interact with international students during their studies in Norway.

Norwegian students who have a study period abroad during their studies bring international ideas back to their home institution and lessons learned from other ways of teaching and learning from their stay at a foreign institution. International students at Norwegian institutions will be able to contribute some of the same to Norwegian institutions by demonstrating other ways of learning, by questioning the way teaching is provided at Norwegian institutions, and by voicing other academic and social perspectives. In this way, international students contribute new perspectives and international competence and experience to Norwegian institutions. International exchange students are a resource for Norwegian higher education institutions, and much greater use ought to be made of their experience and expertise in the internationalisation of Norwegian institutions and Norwegian students.

However, studies from Norway and other countries show that simply receiving students from abroad is not sufficient to create a truly international learning environment where domestic and international students meet academically and socially.¹³ This is due to a variety of factors, but among the most important in Norway are the language and student housing policy.

With a handful of exceptions, international students will generally not be able to follow teaching conducted in Norwegian, meaning teaching in English is a prerequisite for international students to come to Norway. However, it is a challenge that in many cases Norwegian and international students follow completely separate study programmes, with surveys suggesting that

many Norwegian students opt out of courses taught in English wherever possible. This was one of the findings of the EUROMA project, among others, where parallel study programmes are offered with an integrated five-year master's degree in Norwegian and a 3+2 variant where the master's part is in English. The expert panels in the project held this could lead to segregation between the Norwegian students and the international students.¹⁴ Surveys among international students in Norway provide a slightly more nuanced understanding of separate courses of study. In the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku)'s report *International Students in Norway. Contributors to Quality in Higher Education*, international students state that on average between 40 and 50 per cent of their fellow students on the programme or course are Norwegian.¹⁵ The figures are roughly the same for exchange students and degree students.¹⁶ The most successful inbound student mobility, in terms of interaction, is programmes where the visiting international students take the same courses as the domestic students. If the study programmes are organised with a specific semester set aside for either a study period overseas or an international semester with teaching in English for the Norwegian students, this may make it easier to include the international exchange students, since the Norwegian and international students can then take the same courses. However, even in cases where domestic and international students follow the same classes, we see that it can be challenging to ensure good interaction and establish a real sense of community, both academically and socially, between the Norwegian students and the international students. This was one of the findings of the 2017 "Study Barometer" national student survey, which showed inadequate interaction between Norwegian and international students.¹⁷ In order to achieve the desired effects, the institutions must work systematically to ensure better interaction and contact between Norwegian and international students in a number of areas.

¹³ Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU) & Universities Norway – UHR (2013).

¹⁴ Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2017a, 2017b).

¹⁵ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019g).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2018b).

A lack of academic and social interaction with the domestic students is not necessarily a major problem for the international students. These students meet people from all over the world while they are in Norway, exposing them to international perspectives and ideas and enabling them to acquire intercultural skills and understanding. However, for the Norwegian institutions and for Norwegian students who do not go abroad, this constitutes a missed opportunity to benefit from the resource that international students represent.

5.3.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to become better at tapping into the potential that international students represent as a resource to add an international dimension at Norwegian universities and university colleges. Among other things, the institutions ought to pave the way for better interaction between Norwegian and international students.

5.4 Housing for international exchange students

The vast majority of the student welfare organisations ensure that international students who come to Norway have a preferential right to student accommodation. This is natural, since it will be difficult for international students to find accommodation on the private market. Inbound exchange students who come to Norway to study for one semester often come in the autumn semester, and thus only use the student accommodation in the autumn semester. By contrast, Norwegian students often go abroad for study or training period during the spring semester. As a result, many student rooms remain empty in the spring semester, since it is difficult for the student welfare organisations to rent out student accommodation for only the spring semester. This results in a loss of revenue for the student welfare organisations and represents inefficient use of resources. Norwegian students who wish to have a study or training period abroad cite fear that they will lose their student accommodation during the time they are away as one of the obstacles to actually going abroad. With certain restrictions, these students can sublet their student accommodation during the period they are away. Here there is an unexploited potential to

coordinate the respective rules and processes related to student accommodation for outbound domestic students and inbound international exchange students. The institutions and the student welfare organisations work together to ensure better coordination of these processes. Students who wish to go abroad for a period must be given good information about the opportunities available to them to sublet their student accommodation, and the institutions and the student welfare organisations must work together to make it as easy as possible for students to sublet their rooms in student housing.

5.4.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government will ask the student welfare organisations to facilitate more flexible rental contracts for student accommodation in order to make better use of the resources for outbound and inbound exchange students. In this context, the possibility of allowing Norwegian students who are on a learning period abroad to sublet their student accommodation ought to be considered, as this would also help resolve the accommodation situation for inbound exchange students.
- The Government will ask the institutions and the student welfare organisations to calculate the costs of student accommodation being left empty in some semesters as a result of visiting exchange students leaving, and would encourage the institutions and the student welfare organisations to establish agreements governing this.

5.5 Courses in English

A wide, varied range of courses taught in English at both the bachelor's and master's level is one of the main factors and prerequisites for attracting international students. There has been a clear increase in the number of programmes and courses taught in English at the public higher education institutions over the past ten years. Courses in English are also important to be able to offer Norwegian students who do not go abroad an international dimension to their education by, for example, being able to follow teaching in English for one semester alongside visiting international students.

According to the *Status report on higher education in Norway 2020*, education taught in a language other than Norwegian constituted 25.8 per

cent of the total study options in the public sector in 2019, up from about 13.6 per cent in 2009.¹⁸ However, there was large variance between the different institutions and academic communities as well as within the institutions. Some institutions offered no education taught in a foreign language, while others had well over 30 per cent and even as high as 60 per cent. By comparison, the private institutions had an average of 14.6 per cent of their education taught in a language other than Norwegian in 2019. They had not seen a similar development as the public institutions, as the corresponding figure for 2009 was 13.3 per cent.¹⁹

Several of the institutions acknowledge in their consultation input that they have too few courses taught in English, especially at the bachelor's level, and state that they need to have a broader range of courses in English to attract more international students. At the same time, they point out that teaching in English can be a challenge for the employees, and that it can be difficult to get both the academic staff and the Norwegian students to accept courses taught in English. They also point out that it can be difficult to plan which courses to teach in English, since the number of inbound students varies from semester to semester, and that it can be challenging to strike a good balance between the number of courses taught in English and the number taught in Norwegian. They stress that it is expensive to develop and maintain a varied portfolio of subjects taught in English, and that this is often an additional cost for the academic communities.

The Universities and University Colleges Act Section 1-7 states that universities and university colleges are responsible for maintaining and further developing Norwegian academic language.²⁰ In its consultation response, the Language Council of Norway voices concern about the lack of awareness in the sector about choice of language of instruction in the education, and believes that predictability is important for students when it comes to language in the education. In their view, it almost seems as if “ensuring that inbound international students are able to follow teaching is regarded as more important

than ensuring that students who speak Norwegian are able to master Norwegian academic and technical language when they enter the world of work”.²¹ The Language Council of Norway proposes that inbound students should be offered classes on Norwegian culture and language, even if they only come for semester, and that there must be a plan for which courses are to be taught in English, and which are to be taught in Norwegian, to avoid ad hoc decisions. The Language Council of Norway holds that this is the only way the institutions can meet the obligation set out in the Universities and University Colleges Act that universities and university colleges are responsible for maintaining and further developing Norwegian academic language. By contrast, Universities Norway (UHR) says that it will be impossible to achieve a target of more inbound students without the institutions having a broad selection of courses taught in English, and believes that the language debate in the sector must also take this into account.

It will be essential to achieve a good balance in the number of courses taught in English and Norwegian respectively, and between the interests and needs of visiting exchange students and those of the Norwegian students. The institutions need to be aware of this balancing act in their language strategies and adopt a strategic approach to which courses are to be taught in Norwegian and which are to be taught in English. The institutions' responsibility for the further development of Norwegian academic and technical language has been discussed in more detail in the Ministry of Culture's white paper on language.²²

5.5.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to continue their work to offer a sufficient number of educational opportunities in English to be able to attract international students.
- The Government expects an appropriate balance to be achieved between the proportion of courses taught in English and Norwegian respectively, and that the institutions clarify well before the start of the semester which

¹⁸ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2020b), Table V2.55

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Act no. 15 of 1 April 2005 relating to universities and university colleges.

²¹ Input from the Language Council of Norway. Retrieved from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/invitasjon-til-a-komme-med-innspill-til-stortingsmeldingen-om-internasjonalt-studentmobilitet/id2611424/>.

²² Ministry of Culture (2020).

courses are taught in English and which are taught in Norwegian.

- The Government expects the higher education institutions to be aware of and follow up on their responsibility to maintain and further develop Norwegian as an academic and technical language.

5.6 Training for international students within the professional study programmes

Many of the professional study programmes include a compulsory period of supervised professional training. The compulsory supervised professional training is defined in the national curriculum for the individual programme: it must be supervised and assessed, and it is an integral part of the education. The institutions are responsible for finding opportunities for training where the students can do their supervised professional training in partnership with employers and industry. See also chapter 4. Training and work placement opportunities are in short supply in Norway, and it is already challenging for institutions to find enough such opportunities for ordinary students in Norway, especially in the health sciences. To remedy this, some Norwegian institutions send their students on training abroad.

When Norwegian higher education institutions establish agreements with overseas institutions about sending their students abroad to do their supervised professional training, there is an expectation of reciprocity in the agreements – that is, the foreign institutions expect to be able to send their students to Norwegian institutions for supervised professional training in, for example, Norwegian health institutions, schools, kindergartens, etc. This point is also stressed in several of the consultation responses to the white paper. Some institutions, such as Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (DMMH), report that supervised professional training for inbound students works well. DMMH

has a successful scheme where international students have 35 days' supervised professional training in a Norwegian kindergarten.²³ See also box 4.6. Nevertheless, several of the institutions point out in their consultation responses that it can be challenging to find suitable opportunities for international students in Norway. Institutions such as Lovisenberg Diaconal University College (LDH), Østfold University College (HiØ) and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) state that it can be difficult to find suitable training opportunities for international students, primarily related to the fact that the students need to have a good command of Norwegian to be able to participate in e.g., patient care. The fact that Norwegian institutions have limited opportunities to receive inbound students in supervised professional training makes it harder for them to motivate their partners abroad to accept Norwegian students. This lack of reciprocity can make it difficult to enter into appropriate agreements with overseas institutions on supervised professional training. In order for Norwegian higher education institutions and host institutions for supervised professional training to be able to maintain good cooperation with overseas host institutions for supervised professional training, it is important that the Norwegian institutions also have capacity to accept international students for supervised professional training.

5.6.1 Conclusions and measures

- In connection with their cooperation with foreign institutions on periods of practical training abroad, the Government wants the institutions to also offer supervised professional training for international students in Norway, as far as is possible. Key non-academic partners must assist in facilitating this.

²³ Input from Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (DMMH). Retrieved from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/invitasjon-til-akomme-med-innspill-til-stortingsmeldingen-om-internasjonal-studentmobilitet/id2611424/>.

5.7 Statistics

Table 5.4 Number of inbound exchange students per institution 2010–2019 and as a proportion of the total number of students enrolled in 2019

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Inbound 2019 as share of enrolled stud.
NHH Norwegian School of Economics	282	280	296	316	330	331	368	416	456	447	12.9%
Bergen School of Architecture (BAS)	9	7	9	11	13	10	18	16	24	18	10.7%
Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO)	39	48	59	62	47	64	58	55	58	64	9.0%
University of Bergen (UiB)	699	715	806	942	923	1 061	1 178	1 221	1 274	1 211	6.8%
Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH)	29	49	71	83	74	84	98	81	52	54	5.2%
University of Oslo (UiO)	993	966	1 079	1 144	1 198	1 267	1 408	1 413	1 401	1 390	5.2%
Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH)	22	23	17	16	18	23	19	21	20	35	4.5%
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)	1 122	1 161	1 294	1 346	1 420	1 577	1 654	1 531	1 741	1 750	4.5%
Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	98	122	120	118	138	145	192	287	249	230	4.1%
Molde University College – Specialized University in Logistics (HiMolde)	56	67	46	56	44	79	73	94	62	87	3.5%
BI Norwegian Business School	451	509	489	453	513	579	676	691	703	678	3.5%
Volda University College (HVO)	64	73	91	105	74	112	118	134	117	128	3.2%
University of Agder (UiA)	207	228	239	246	277	296	317	307	384	365	3.2%
Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO)	12	17	17	20	19	20	22	26	22	18	3.2%
University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway (UiT)	366	372	403	393	428	436	451	443	536	511	3.1%
University of Stavanger (UiS)	162	186	196	169	215	273	322	341	306	299	2.8%
University of South-Eastern Norway (USN)	253	235	274	299	326	334	382	418	410	385	2.5%
Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (DMMH)	15	7	25	11	20	14	18	39	22	32	2.2%

Table 5.4 Number of inbound exchange students per institution 2010–2019 and as a proportion of the total number of students enrolled in 2019

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Inbound 2019 as share of enrolled stud.
Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (HiNN)	132	146	108	107	166	178	238	248	234	234	1.8%
Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL)	187	173	173	149	173	228	218	269	244	258	1.8%
Sámi University of Applied Sciences	3	8	16	10	9	5	7	8	2	3	1.8%
Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet)	299	286	278	236	223	263	324	306	325	296	1.6%
Nord University	114	107	127	156	146	156	153	150	150	153	1.5%
Østfold University College (HiØ)	68	70	93	88	90	72	99	92	110	64	1.0%
NLA University College	9	7	17	5	8	5	4	5	17	18	0.7%
VID Specialized University	9	27	26	22	25	21	26	23	25	30	0.6%
MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society	8	12	6	12	2	22	9	16	3	7	0.5%
Kristiania University College (HK)		2		4	7	9	24	24	1	2	0.0%
Barratt Due Institute of Music					2		1	4	1		0.0%
Lovisenberg Diaconal University College (LDH)	3	3		4	7	2	3	4	1		0.0%
Total	5 711	5 906	6 375	6 583	6 935	7 666	8 478	8 683	8 950	8 767	

Students on an individual exchange agreement or through research programmes have not been included.

Source: Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)

6 Erasmus+

6.1 About Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the European Commission's programme to support education, training, youth and sports for the period 2014–2021. Erasmus+ is a merger of previous EU programmes for education, training, youth and sports. Norway has participated in several of these programmes since 1992.

The programme covers the entire course of education and comprises three main initiatives or "key actions": mobility, cooperation and policy reform. There are individual actions under each of these areas covering one or more sectors. The programme is managed decentrally through national agencies in the programme countries, with some central management from the European Commission. The Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) is Norway's national agency for elements pertaining to education, training and sports. The Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) is Norway's national agency for the Youth component of the programme.

Through Erasmus+, Norwegian academic communities can compete nationally and internationally on education and thus be measured up against other countries. Around 90 per cent of the funds from Erasmus+ are allocated nationally. When the programme celebrated its first 30 years of existence in 2017, 9 million pupils, apprentices, students, youth workers and teachers had received grants from Erasmus+ or one of its predecessors. Of these, 83,000 were Norwegian. In the period 2014–2018, Diku awarded NOK 843 million to Norwegian universities and university colleges through the programme. In addition, Norwegian institutions receive funding directly from the European Commission through centrally managed projects and funds through partnerships with institutions in other countries. Funding has been granted to almost 4,500 projects with Norwegian participation through Erasmus+. Norwegian partners participate in European projects that together have been awarded more than NOK 5

billion.¹ This amount includes funds for mobility and cooperation projects. Norwegian institutions do not receive all the funding when it comes to the cooperation projects, but the figures illustrate that Norwegian pupils, students and institutions that participate in mobility and cooperation projects bring substantial sums of money home to Norway. At the same time, the Storting estimated that the total cost of Erasmus+ in the period 2014–2020 was NOK 3.3 billion (cf. Recommendation no. 153 to the Storting (2013–2014) and Proposition no. 43 to the Storting (2013–2014)).²

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs is responsible for the Youth section of the programme. The main goal of the Youth section of the programme is to give young people the opportunity to participate actively in society and increase international understanding, tolerance and solidarity. The Youth section of the programme also has measures within the three key actions. In the current period (2014–2020), the Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) has awarded NOK 224 million to 685 projects and 18,000 Norwegian participants in mobility projects³.

Erasmus+ has an international part that includes almost all countries outside the programme countries (the EU member states, the three EEA/EFTA countries, Türkiye, North Macedonia and Serbia). Almost a fifth of Erasmus+ funding goes to cooperation with these countries outside the programme countries, including both exchanges and partnerships. Much of the funding

¹ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019h).

² Recommendation no. 153 to the Storting (2013–2014) *Recommendation from the Standing Committee on Education, Research and Church Affairs on consent to participation in the decision of the EEA Committee on incorporation into the EEA Agreement of Regulation (EU) no. 1288/2013 establishing the Erasmus+ Programme* and Proposition no. 43 to the Storting (2013–2014) *Consent to participation in the decision of the EEA Committee on incorporation into the EEA Agreement of Regulation (EU) no. 1288/2013 establishing the Erasmus+ Programme*.

³ Based on allocations up to and including the second allocation round in 2019 and an estimate for the rest of the period.

for Erasmus+ is transferred from the EU's budget for foreign policy and development aid and is earmarked for specific regions. A particularly large part of the funding is specifically earmarked for the EU's neighbouring countries to the south and the east and Asia.

Erasmus+ is the largest and most important programme for achieving the Government's long-term goal that half of Norwegian graduates should have participated in a learning period abroad. Erasmus+ targets young people, pupils, students, employees, society, employers, and national authorities. Erasmus+ is also based on institutional cooperation between higher education institutions, which is essential for the realization of the Government's target for international student mobility in higher education.

6.2 The Government's goals for Norway's participation in Erasmus+ in the period 2014–2020

6.2.1 Overarching objectives and results of Erasmus+ 2014–2020

Overarching objectives

The focus of this white paper is international student mobility in higher education; however, since Erasmus+ covers the entire course of education, targets and results for the entire field of education are also discussed below, in addition to youth.

Norway's participation in Erasmus+ shall contribute to the attainment of the goals for Norway's education policy, ensure quality development in the education sector, and strengthen international education cooperation at all levels. Erasmus+ helps make education relevant and increase the employability of pupils, apprentices and students, while providing the individual with opportunities for academic and personal development. Excellent international cooperation is important to ensure the quality of Norwegian education and training, and Erasmus+ is the main instrument in this respect.

The budget for Erasmus+ grew by 40 per cent for the period 2014–2020, compared with the previous budget period. The Ministry of Education and Research developed a strategy in 2016,⁴ where ambitious targets were set for the period, reflecting the increase in the budget. The former Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU), now the Norwegian

Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), then prepared a national action plan that specified the objectives in more concrete terms.

Results of Erasmus+ 2014–2020

In October 2019, Diku published a report analysing and documenting the effects of Erasmus+ for the period 2014 to 2018–2019.⁵ The review of the results below is based on Diku's report. The report presents the results of Erasmus+ in respect of the goals of increased mobility, cooperation on joint projects, regional development, innovation and competitiveness. In general terms, Erasmus+ also contributes to enhanced European integration and provides access to a broad international network and important international knowledge. Diku's review of the results shows that the targets for Erasmus+ 2014–2020 have been reached or are expected to have been reached by the end of 2020.

The report from Diku concludes that Erasmus+ helps enhance the quality of Norwegian education as a result of the following:

- mobility, in that students spend time abroad and gain experience and expertise from overseas institutions and/or workplaces in the form of different courses and different knowledge than they would have access to in Norway. They also gain international experience, as well as developing foreign language and general skills
- contribution to teaching, through the development of learning materials and by Norwegian institutions conducting teaching programmes and methods, academic supervision or study programmes in cooperation with international partners
- development of policies, regulations and systems that contribute to quality enhancement and enable pupils, students and staff to study and teach across national borders
- knowledge sharing through participation in international networks

In the white paper Report no. 16 to the Storting (2016–2017) *Quality culture in higher education*, the Government outlines its understanding of quality as meaning that students shall achieve the best possible learning outcomes and personal development, have access to relevant education to

⁴ Ministry of Education and Research (2016).

⁵ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019h).

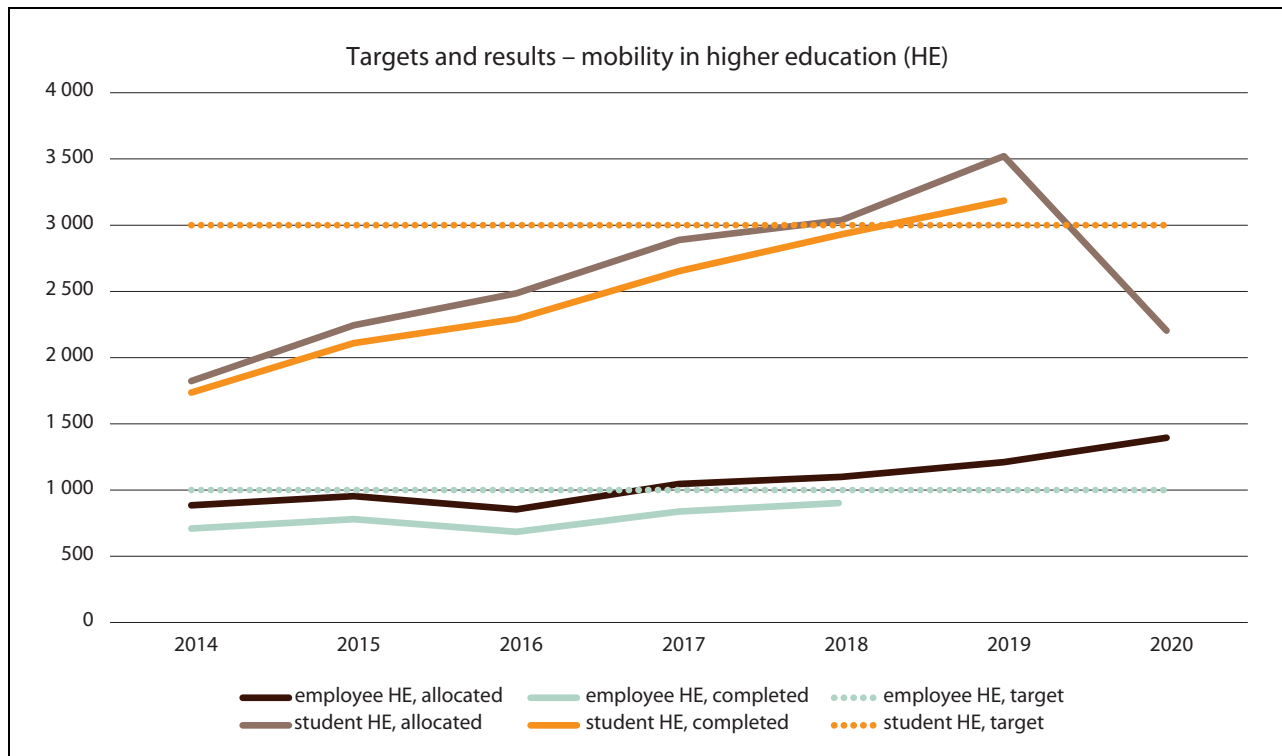


Figure 6.1 Targets and results – mobility in higher education (HE)

Source: Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku)

prepare them for active participation in a democratic and diverse society and for a future professional career, and complete their education as efficiently as possible. The white paper also outlines quality challenges in higher education related to, among other things, digitalisation, career relevance, connection to research, active learning methods, and continuing and further education. There is a large overlap between the goals for education in Norway and other European countries, and Erasmus+ serves to further unite them.

With regard to primary and secondary education and training, key objectives are to equip the individual and society with the skills, attitudes and values needed to ensure the future basis for welfare, growth, wealth creation and sustainability. There is extensive academic cooperation between kindergartens, primary schools, and lower and upper secondary schools in a wide range of areas. Participation in Erasmus+ also helps schools achieve the objectives in the overarching section of the curriculum related to the foundational values in the teaching (such as identity and cultural diversity) and interdisciplinary topics such as democracy, citizenship, and sustainable development.

In addition, Erasmus+ provides opportunities that help ensure lifelong learning for all, by both

facilitating mobility stays where individuals get to improve their skills and competencies, and through the development of courses and services aimed at adults, both in adult education and in higher education.

The mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ in Norway concludes that the programme has a positive impact, at both the individual level and the institutional level.⁶ At the individual level, participation in mobility projects is reported to contribute to increased cross-cutting competencies, improved foreign language skills and increased cultural understanding. At the institutional level, reported benefits include improved teaching skills among educators, with international projects highlighted as a unique opportunity to develop new methods and work on long-term quality enhancement. The European study of the impacts of Erasmus+ within higher education finds that cooperation between universities supported by Erasmus+ leads to enhanced quality, greater relevance, increased innovation, and greater accessibility in higher education in Europe.⁷ Below are the results achieved in different areas of the Erasmus+ programme.

⁶ Ideas2evidence (2017).

⁷ European Commission (2014) and (2019c).

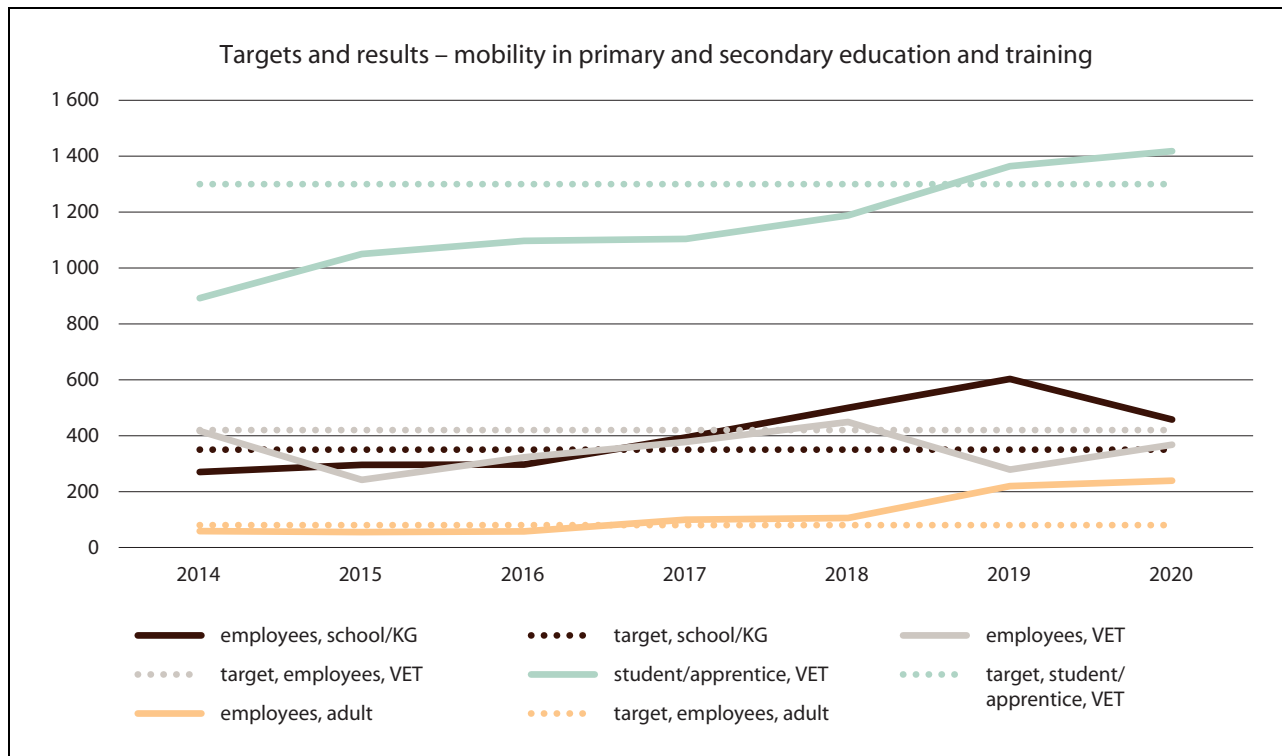


Figure 6.2 Targets and results – mobility in primary and secondary education and training

KG: kindergarten

VET: vocational education and training

Source: Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku)

Goal of increased mobility

The Ministry of Education and Research set the following quantitative targets for the period 2014–2020:

- increase in the number of Norwegian students who have a study period or practical training with an Erasmus+ grant, from approximately 1,700 in 2014 to 3,000 in 2020
- increase in the number of administrative and academic employees who have an overseas stay, from approximately 700 in 2014 to 1,000 in 2020
- increase in the number of teachers and other personnel in schools and kindergartens who have an overseas stay, from 270 in 2014 to 350 in 2020
- increase in the number of teachers in adult education who have an overseas stay, from 60 in 2014 to 80 in 2020
- increase in the number of teachers and instructors in vocational education and training who have an overseas stay, from approximately 320 in 2014 to 420 in 2020

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 show the results obtained within higher education and primary and secondary education and training, respectively. In 2017, 2,684 students went overseas on an exchange through Erasmus+. In 2019, 3,436 study and practical training stays were allocated in Europe, and 3,185 students were on a study or practical training stay, meaning that the target of 3,000 students a year was achieved. The decline in the number of study and practical training stays allocated in 2020 is due to COVID-19. In addition, the figures for 2019 have not yet been fully reported, so the final figure for 2019 may be higher. When it comes to employee mobility in higher education, the Ministry of Education and Research has set a target that from 2020, each year 1,000 employees will have a teaching or training stay abroad. A total of 902 employees in the higher education sector had a mobility stay abroad in 2018, up from 691 in 2014. In 2019, 1,224 grants were awarded for outgoing employee mobility in Europe, however the figures for 2019 have not yet been fully reported. It is therefore unclear whether this target has been met.

The Erasmus Impact Study (2014)⁸ found that across Europe students with international experience did much better on the job market than others. Students in this group were half as likely to experience long-term unemployment compared with students who have not studied or trained abroad and, five years after graduation, their unemployment rate was 23 per cent lower. They had made new contacts, had new experiences and gained new knowledge that they could use in their job or studies. New inspiration and ideas and improved foreign language skills were also highlighted as positive effects of overseas stays.

In respect of kindergartens and schools, figure 6.2 shows that the target of 350 employees going abroad on a mobility stay each year from 2020 has been reached, despite a decline in 2020 as a result of COVID-19. The corresponding target of 80 employees in adult education has also been reached. Within vocational education and training, the target of 420 teachers and instructors having an international mobility stay has almost been reached. In respect of pupils and apprentices, the figure shows that the target in Diku's work programme of 1,300 has been reached.

Within vocational education and training, overseas stays for pupils, apprentices and staff are very popular and receive many applications. A study of a sample of Norwegian upper secondary schools shows that a training stay abroad has a huge impact on the pupils' motivation and personal development, as well as providing them with valuable international experience. The schools also benefit through the international network they develop through the work on exchange programmes. In addition, international cooperation boosts the school's reputation and is a source of new inspiration for teachers.

International mobility in education is primarily aimed at individuals, but employee mobility also has benefits for the institutions. A study of employee mobility among schools with data from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania and Poland shows that teachers are satisfied with the outcome in terms of professional development and that mobility makes them more open to innovations in teaching.⁹ Mobility also affects the activities in the schools, with a greater focus on internationalisation. As regards the impact of employee mobility for activities in the schools, it is also highlighted that employees who go on a mobility stay abroad make new personal contacts, which can in

turn provide a basis for schools to develop new forms of cooperation and new international projects.

Joint projects for innovation, relevance and increased quality

The purpose of Norwegian higher education institutions' participation in joint international projects is to promote innovation, relevance and quality in the education, both in primary and secondary education and higher education. This includes both strategic partnerships and centralised measures. Erasmus+ has provided funding for more than 700 projects since 2014. Figure 6.3 illustrates Norway's participation in strategic partnerships, broken down by sector. Both cases where the Norwegian institution is the coordinator and cases where it is a partner have been included. To date, the budgets for strategic partnerships have remained relatively stable during this programme period. This is demonstrated by the fact that participation has been relatively stable – with one exception for the category of partnerships aimed at kindergartens and schools. This is due to the European Commission lowering the threshold for participation in this type of partnership during the period. The decline in school development partnerships in 2020 is due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategic partnerships are collaboration projects that exist in all parts of the education sector and are the most common type of collaboration in Erasmus+. So far, Norwegian actors have participated in just over 650 strategic partnerships, as either the project coordinator or a partner. Together with some 3,600 partners in and outside Europe, the projects have received almost EUR 115 million for quality development work. Almost 1,100 products have been launched and used in teaching, for example in courses, learning programmes or a new syllabus. The projects have also resulted in the development of more than 100 examples of new digital learning technology and the publication of twenty-odd policy recommendations and an equal number of scholarly articles.

The topics in the projects are closely related to both European education policy and Norway's national education policy. For example, there are 150 projects that deal with inclusion and integration, and 57 projects on sharing and developing methods to prevent drop-out. Almost 14 per cent of the projects are related to the use of ICT in teaching, and a similar number focus on language learning. Entrepreneurship is another common topic.

⁸ European Commission (2014).

⁹ European Commission (2019d).

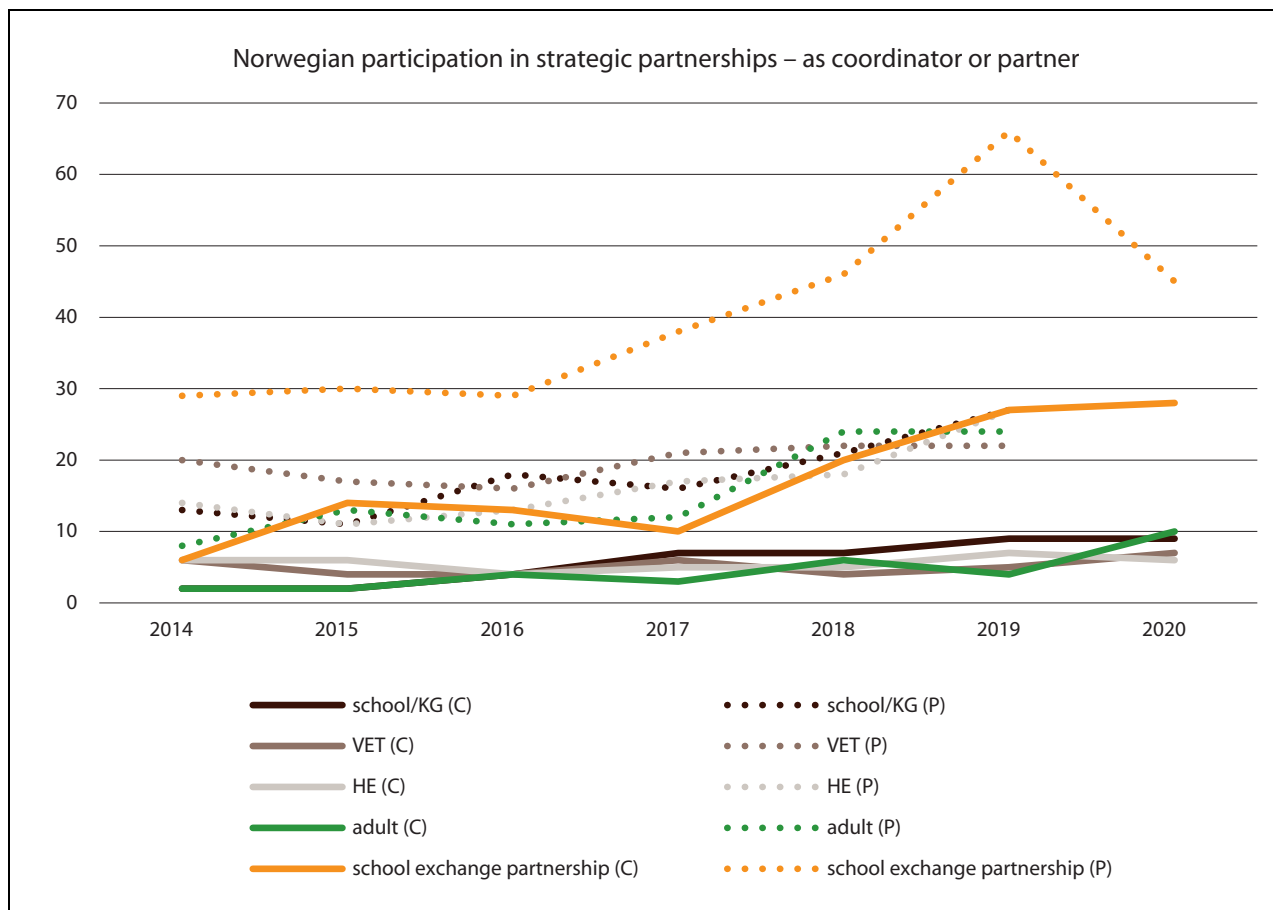


Figure 6.3 Norwegian participation in strategic partnerships – as coordinator or partner

KG: kindergarten

HE: higher education

C: coordinator of a project

P: partner in a project

VET: vocational education and training

Source: Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku)

Centrally-managed cooperation programmes

Cooperation programmes are managed by the European Commission and its subordinate body the *Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)*. These are large and prestigious programmes where applicants must compete for funding, with high demands on both the management and the academic communities at the participating institutions. Some actions are particularly high priority. For example, “Knowledge Alliances” are transnational projects which bring higher education institutions and business together to foster innovation in higher education, while “Sector Skills Alliances” are collaborations between the higher education sector and industry related to vocational education and training. Capacity building projects are intended to strengthen the education sector in the partner countries.

Overall, there has been an increase in the number of Norwegian institutions participating in centralised actions during the programme period, albeit with variation between the different types of projects. For example, Norway has gone from having no participation in the first call for knowledge alliances to having Norwegian project coordinators in two out of the 33 projects that were granted funding in 2019 (the University of Stavanger and the company Edtech Foundry). In addition to this, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) is coordinating the first Norwegian-led sector skills alliance Lean 4.0, which was granted funding in 2018.

Erasmus Mundus is a programme within Erasmus+ that supports universities and university colleges that develop joint master’s programmes for students from all over the world. The programme has faced a number of challenges

since it started in 2004, primarily linked to administrative and financial aspects. Despite these problems, academic staff have given very positive feedback on the benefit of joint programmes and joint degrees, as have the students. They are high-quality degrees that attract exceptional students. During the project period, Norwegian institutions have been granted a total of 19 joint master's degrees under the *Erasmus Mundus* programme, either as a partner or coordinator.

The European Commission's new flagship initiative *European Universities* has attracted great interest among higher education institutions in Europe, and five Norwegian institutions have been awarded "European University" status in the first two pilot calls in 2019 and 2020 (cf. the more detailed discussion in chapter 4).

Instrument for regional development

The mid-term evaluation of Erasmus+ from 2017 shows that Erasmus+ has made significant contributions to how schools and school owners address the issue of drop-out among pupils, which is a high priority in both Norway and the EU.¹⁰ Several Norwegian counties have worked systematically in recent years to coordinate the schools' participation in Erasmus+ within vocational education and training. This also contributes to competence raising and development of the schools in the counties, and to closer ties between the schools and industry. Erasmus+ prioritises collaboration across sectors, and several project categories include these kinds of projects. There are numerous examples of county authorities or schools that have worked closely with local business players to devise projects to improve the competitiveness of local industry. Now that the county authorities have been given a broader mandate to develop skills and expertise in the regions, there is great potential to make even more systematic use of the Erasmus+ programme to underpin this work. For example, Blått kompetansesenter in Trøndelag has developed a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning and training modules within the aquaculture industry.

Innovation capacity and competitiveness

Erasmus+ has actions aimed at building closer links between academia and business. In some of the schemes it is a requirement that businesses

participate on an equal footing with higher education institutions. Since 2014, innovation and entrepreneurship have been in particular focus in Erasmus+, as a response to the EU's strategy for growth and employment, Europe 2020. Strategic partnerships, traineeships abroad for upper-secondary pupils and students, and not least Knowledge Alliances and Sector Skills Alliances are all measures that encourage, or require, educational institutions to cooperate with businesses and other parties outside the education sector. Edtech foundry is an example of a Norwegian company that is coordinating an Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance. In the alliance it coordinates, companies and higher education institutions from six European countries will use artificial intelligence and chat technology to help make students feel less lonely and thus reduce drop-out in higher education.

The Youth component of Erasmus+

The component of Erasmus+ targeting young people between the ages 13 and 30 years and youth workers is called Youth in Action. As mentioned above, the main objectives of this part of the programme are giving young people the opportunity to participate actively in society and to increase international understanding, tolerance and solidarity. Active participation encompasses both active citizenship and participation in democratic and political life, and participation in education and work, so that young people are better equipped to live good lives and become self-sufficient adults. The main agenda of the Erasmus+ is Youth in Action to promote equity and inclusion, and activities by and for young people with fewer opportunities are a priority. The programme also aims to strengthen youth work, contribute to the development of youth policy, and promote European cooperation in the youth field.

The methods and content of the projects within this section of the programme are based on non-formal learning. The educational goals are to be achieved through the involvement of and co-management by the young people themselves. An important goal for Youth in Action is to facilitate recognition of the learning and skills obtained through volunteering activities and organisations.

The programme is effective in respect of increasing young people's involvement in the local community and their ability to present ideas and express their opinions. The mid-term evaluation¹¹

¹⁰ Ideas2evidence (2017).

¹¹ Ideas2evidence (2017).

of the programme concludes that Erasmus+ is a good tool for stimulating participation in democratic and political life among young people. These findings are supported by the RAY surveys conducted by the RAY Network, which is the open research network of National Agencies of the European youth programmes and their research partners.¹² Participation in the programme also appears to motivate young people to take education and boost their employability. The programme has also been relatively successful in including young people with fewer opportunities. Some 18 per cent of the Norwegian participants perceive that they have fewer or slightly fewer opportunities than their peers, according to the RAY surveys. Of the applications granted under Youth in Action, 30 per cent are inclusion projects.

The municipalities and county municipalities use the Youth component of Erasmus+ to create better services for young people locally. They use the programme strategically to improve the youth work skills of their employees. Youth Work Norway (“Ungdom og Fritid”), the national association of youth clubs, uses Erasmus+ to strengthen the recognition of youth work and has, for example, collaborated in the Professional Open Youth Work in Europe (POYWE) network to create a strategic partnership to strengthen ties between research, politics and youth work.

6.3 The Government’s ambitions for Norway’s participation in Erasmus+ in the period 2021–2027

In June 2018, the European Commission presented its proposal for the EU’s next programme to support education, training, youth and sport (Erasmus+¹³). The Government has great ambitions for Norway as a knowledge nation, and Erasmus+ is the main international instrument in the field of education. Erasmus+ helps raise the standard of Norwegian education and training across the board. It is essential that Norwegian universities and university colleges participate in international networks in order to gain access to knowledge as a basis for developing Norwegian society. There is a large overlap between the objectives of Erasmus+ and the objectives of Norway’s policy for education and training. Erasmus+ is the most important instrument in the work towards the Government’s goal of a cultural change in Norwe-

gian higher education such that study or training periods in another country is integrated into all study programmes. During the current programme period, Erasmus+ has provided a broad spectrum of players in every part of the field of education with access to extensive international networks. This has helped strengthen the quality, relevance and attractiveness of the Norwegian education system, as well as contributing to increased cultural understanding and language proficiencies and greater tolerance and respect for other people. These are values that are very important both for society in Norway as a whole and for the ability of Norwegian businesses to function in a globalised world and an open world economy.

The new programme for education, training, youth and sports is set to be significantly more ambitious and far-reaching than the current programme. The final budget for Erasmus+ is not expected to be adopted until Germany takes over the presidency of the EU in autumn 2020, but it seems likely that the financial contribution of the EEA/EFTA states for participation in the next programme period will be higher. Primarily, this means that more people will be able to benefit from the programme, but it will also commit those who currently use Erasmus+ to increase their efforts and mobilisation. The proposed new programme is essentially a continuation of the existing programme; however, the new programme will be simpler to use and more inclusive, meaning new groups will have access to Erasmus+.

The Government’s ambitions for Norway’s participation in Erasmus+ in the period 2021–2027

The Government proposes that Norway participate in the EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport (Erasmus+) in the period 2021–2027, but will not make a final decision on this until the EU’s long-term financial framework has been adopted.

Increased mobility in higher education

Erasmus+ is the most important instrument to achieve the Government’s ambition of a cultural change in higher education. The goal is that international student mobility shall be an integral part of all study programmes and that students will have to actively opt out of taking part of their education abroad. In order to ensure that the internationalisation of higher education helps raise the quality, relevance and attractiveness of Norwegian

¹² <https://www.researchyouth.eu/>

¹³ European Commission (2018b).

higher education institutions, it will be important that student mobility is integrated into and rooted in cooperation between Norwegian and foreign institutions. Erasmus+ ensures this. Institutions that participate in Erasmus+ sign an Erasmus Charter, which regulates all aspects of student mobility, before, during and after the mobility stay, as well as cooperation on joint projects between the participating institutions.¹⁴

The Government wants the internationalisation work at Norwegian higher education institutions to be fully integrated with the other tasks at the institution. This can be achieved in many different ways. The management of the institution, together with the academic and administrative staff, should convey an expectation to the students that all courses of study ought to include a learning period abroad. As stated in the white paper Report no. 16 to the Storting (2016–2017) *Quality culture in higher education*, key elements to ensure internationalisation include student and staff mobility, teaching collaborations, collaboration on the development of educational opportunities, and collaboration on degree programmes such as double or joint degrees. Erasmus+ facilitates all these elements. Erasmus+ is also the main instrument to ensure we achieve the long-term goal that at least half of all students who take a Norwegian degree will have had a study period abroad. In 2017, approximately 40 per cent of the Norwegian students who had a study or training period abroad received an Erasmus+ grant, and with the expected increased budget, Erasmus+ will contribute to the realisation of the Government's ambition that at least half of all students who take a Norwegian degree have a study period abroad.

Cooperation on joint projects and new initiatives in higher education and vocational education and training

At the end of the current programme period, the European Commission has established two major new initiatives. One is called *European Universities* and is a new initiative to strengthen cooperation between European higher education institutions (cf. the more detailed presentation in section 4.3.5). The other is Centres of Vocational Excellence, which is a new initiative to strengthen cooperation between vocational training institutions

and businesses with the aim of further developing quality and relevance in vocational training. These new initiatives will be fully implemented in the next programme period, which starts in 2021.

Increased synergy between research and education and other programmes

In the current programme period, there has been little focus on the connection between research and education in the EU programmes. As reported by Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), even if individual researchers are involved in research, innovation and educational activities, the interfaces between them are still underdeveloped: politically, organisationally and financially – nationally and at the European level. Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Research Council of Norway and Diku have called for stronger synergies between the Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe¹⁵ programmes in the next programme period¹⁶.

It is already entirely possible to create synergies between the programmes. Erasmus+ can finance student and staff mobility in connection with Horizon 2020 projects, and Erasmus+ projects can be a platform for preparing applications for Horizon 2020 funding. For example, a knowledge alliance can help prepare the alliance partners to participate in future KIC projects¹⁷ within Horizon 2020, since the two schemes have parallel and partially overlapping goals. Moreover, findings from Horizon 2020 can be incorporated into the education offered through the follow-up of an Erasmus+ project. For example, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) has developed a Jean Monnet module¹⁸ within European studies. They are also participating in a major European research and innovation project on the same topic. It is the Government's ambition that there will be more synergies in the next programme period.

Potential synergies are not limited to higher education. There are also examples of synergies between school projects in Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020. Together with other partners, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) has

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/applicants/higher-education-charter_en.

¹⁵ Horizon Europe is the EU's ninth framework programme for research and innovation and starts on 1 January 2021.

¹⁶ Ministry of Education and Research (2018).

¹⁷ KIC stands for Knowledge and Innovation Communities.

¹⁸ Jean Monnet activities within Erasmus+ aim to promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of European Union studies worldwide.

participated in school projects under Erasmus+, in Horizon 2020 and in schemes funded by the EEA and Norway Grants related to creative approaches to teaching natural sciences in schools.

The Government's ambitions for greater synergy effects are not limited to Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe. National schemes for global education cooperation build on the Panorama strategy for cooperation on higher education and research (cf. section 2.2.2) or Norway's priority areas in foreign and development policy. Schemes under the latter also include a number of schemes administered by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) and some administered by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). Stronger synergies can be achieved between the international dimension in Erasmus+ for cooperation with countries outside Europe on the one hand and Norwegian schemes on the other, since they largely encompass the same countries.

Education and training are a priority sector for the EEA and Norway Grants. Through dedicated educational programmes, the grants can support, among other things, partnerships between institutions on all educational levels and scholarship schemes within vocational education and training and higher education. Many of the priorities coincide with those set for Erasmus+, and it ought to be possible to generate increased synergies. During this programme period, one of the objectives of the research programmes funded by the EEA and Norway Grants is to help strengthen internationalisation and project experience among recipients of the EEA and Norway Grants, putting them in a better position to participate in Horizon 2020.¹⁹ It is the Government's ambitions that the same will apply to the education funds, i.e. that funds distributed through the education programmes will help strengthen the recipients' participation in Erasmus+. In Norway, the educational programmes funded by the EEA and Norway Grants are managed by the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku). The Government would also like to see greater synergies between Erasmus+ and Nordplus funds. For example, Nordic project schemes can be used as a platform for recruiting participants to major Erasmus+ projects. National funds such as

NOTED must also be assessed in view of opportunities for synergies with other programmes (see section 4.6).

Increased opportunities for mobility in primary and secondary education and training

Erasmus+ is by far the most extensive instrument in Norway to make primary and secondary education and training more international. When the new Erasmus+ programme comes into force from 2021 for Norway (assuming Norway participates), upper secondary pupils in the education programme specialisation in general studies will have the opportunity to take advantage of individual mobility in Erasmus+ mobility schemes, and pupils in vocational education and training will be able to participate in the global mobility initiatives, for the first time. This will contribute to the work towards the goal of internationalisation being accessible to all, and it will be an important factor in the efforts to achieve increased mobility in higher education, when the pupils eventually become students.

Connection to businesses and the sphere of work

One of the aims of the current Erasmus+ programme is to strengthen cooperation between business and education. Organisations from the sphere of work can participate in and coordinate projects on an equal footing with actors in the education sector in Knowledge Alliances and Sector Skills Alliances, but also within new initiatives such as *European Universities* and *Centres of Vocational Excellence*.

Training mobility is an underused instrument in Erasmus+. Mobility in the form of a work placement etc. abroad have an added value far beyond the value of the practical work experience itself. The students experience a different work culture and are exposed to different norms and values, both formal and informal, that regulate working life in another country. In an increasingly international business and social landscape, where the demand for intercultural understanding and international perspectives is growing, having work experience in another country will be able to provide added value in the form of international knowledge and contacts. Norwegian students ought to take greater advantage of this opportunity, in the same way as Norwegian businesses ought to accept more student interns from other countries.

¹⁹ See for example: <https://www.forskningradet.no/sok-om-finansiering/internasjonale-midler/eos-midlene/>.

Facilitate youth participation

Assuming Norway participates in Erasmus+, the Youth component will serve to strengthen the work aimed at young people carried out by civil society organisations, local authorities and county authorities. The Youth in Action programme will include an opportunity for international mobility and cooperation that is highly inclusive and has a low threshold. The Government expects that this kind of work will be very important for the young people who participate and will have a positive impact for them in the short term and in the longer run.

Increased engagement and new participants

Norwegian participation in Erasmus+ 2021–2027 will be a major priority for the Government in the policy areas of education, training, youth and sports. Although the new programme is largely a continuation of the current programme, it will be somewhat simpler and more inclusive. This will allow even more students, pupils, young people, employees and others to participate.

Erasmus+ has a very wide impact area, with effects that reach far beyond the areas covered by the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, and the Ministry of Culture. Actors in areas such as international cooperation, development cooperation, integration and local and regional development, trade and industry, and NGOs ought therefore to get actively involved in Erasmus+. For local authorities and county authorities, an increased budget for Erasmus+ will provide greater opportunities to get involved both in their capacity as school owners and as the agency responsible for developing regional policies for competencies and education and industrial and business development.

Better utilisation of the Erasmus+ financial contribution

Approximately 10 per cent of Norway's financial contribution to Erasmus+ is distributed centrally by the European Commission through competitions. In order to stimulate Norwegian actors to apply for this type of funding, the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) offers project establishment support that potential applicants can use to prepare applications and for travel and meetings in connection with their appli-

cation. Experience indicates that this support has been positive, despite the fact that it is nowhere near the level of that of similar support mechanisms under Horizon 2020. The Government will assess the level of support for establishing projects²⁰ in Erasmus+ in future national budgets.

Assuming Norway decides to participate, the increased budget in Erasmus+ will result in increased activity and more work for the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku). Increased budgets will lead to more application processing, guidance, financial management, auditing, checks and follow-up of projects, among other things. There will also be more work related to information, communication and dissemination of results, and more work to develop knowledge and document results from participation in the new programme period. The Government will consider compensating the national offices for this additional work.

6.3.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government proposes that Norway participate in the EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport (Erasmus+) in the period 2021–2027, but will not make a final decision on this until the EU's long-term financial framework has been adopted.
- In the event of a final decision to participate in Erasmus+ from 2021, the Government will present a proposition of consent to the Storting on participation in Erasmus+ with a view to incorporation into the EEA Agreement no later than July 2021. The Government will return to the budgetary implications in the annual national budgets.
- In the event of a final decision to participate in Erasmus+ from 2021, the Government will assess the need for increased administrative funding for the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) and the Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) to deal with the increased budget and level of activity related to Erasmus+ in future national budgets.
- In the event of a final decision to participate in Erasmus+ from 2021, the Government will assess the need for any stimulation funds to

²⁰ For more information on the Erasmus+ Project Establishment Support: <https://diku.no/programmer/erasmus-prosjektetableringsstoette-pes-sentraliserte-tiltak>.

increase participation in Erasmus+ and the need for supplementary funds²¹ to increase the impact of Norway's participation in the programme in future national budgets.

- In the event of a final decision to participate in Erasmus+ from 2021, the Government will develop a new strategy for the entire programme period 2021–2027, based on the adopted programme.

²¹ Separate funding for additional independent activities that support or build on an Erasmus+ project in order to boost the impact of Norway's participation in the Erasmus+ programme in society.

- Assuming Norway decides to participate in these programmes in the future, the Government expects a greater degree of synergies between the various mobility programmes and other international programmes such as Horizon Europe, Nordplus, educational programmes funded by the EEA and Norway Grants, NOTED, UTFORSK and INTPART.
- In the event of a final decision that Norway will participate in Erasmus+, the Government expects active participation by the universities, university colleges and other relevant stakeholders.

7 International degree students who come to Norway

There has been a significant increase in the number of international students who come to Norway to study since the turn of the millennium. Some of the growth is due to external factors, such as an increase in international students globally and more participants in the EU education programmes. However, it is also partly a result of Norwegian political priorities, as well as factors at Norwegian higher education institutions, such as more programmes taught in English, more widespread and more extensive institutional cooperation with overseas institutions, and the absence of tuition fees.¹ In the first edition of the OECD's *Indicators of Talent Attractiveness*, Norway ranked very well on the indicators pertaining to how attractive Norway is to international students. Norway was in second place, after Switzerland, ahead of Germany and Finland.² Elements that explain the positive results include courses in English, the absence of tuition fees, and the fact that a student visa includes the right to work part-time alongside studying. As a general rule, however, international students are not entitled to Norwegian educational grants and loans.

A survey conducted among international students in Norway in 2019 has provided further insight into students' reasons for choosing Norway. High educational quality is the most important factor for full-degree students. The second most important factor is the perception of Norway as peaceful and safe. A quarter of the students cited the opportunity to stay on and work in Norway after graduation.³

Norway has attached particular importance to exchanges through institutional cooperation in its policy. Attracting full-degree students has not been a priority, except in connection with joint degrees, which are somewhere between exchange mobility and full-degree mobility. The Quota Scheme, which has now been discontinued,

provided a grant to study for a full degree in Norway; however, the political reasoning behind the scheme were development aid and capacity building in the Global South, as opposed to attracting students to Norwegian institutions. From 2020, funding for full-degree mobility will also be available through NORPART. International degree students have made up a proportion of between 3 and 4 per cent of all enrolled students in Norway in the past ten years.

Norway has traditionally had a relatively high ratio of students who choose to take a full degree abroad, and relatively many Norwegian students still continue to go abroad to study – just under 7 per cent of the total student population. By comparison, the average in the EU is about half this, and in the OECD area around a quarter of this.⁴ Although more students are coming to Norway to take a full degree than before, when compared this group still make up only about half the number of full-degree Norwegian students studying abroad. This sets us apart from many other European countries, such as Germany, France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark and especially the United Kingdom, which attract more degree students than they send out.⁵

Several of the countries with which Norway cooperates on education and research attach significantly more importance to attracting students from abroad than sending their own students overseas. This is the case in Finland, the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom, Canada and Russia. Countries like China and India, which have previously largely sent students abroad are starting to focus more on inbound student mobility. For many countries, attracting degree students is part of a broader strategy to attract highly skilled workers.⁶

¹ Wiers-Jenssen (2018).

² OECD (2019).

³ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019g).

⁴ OECD (2018), p. 230.

⁵ German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD (2019), p. 21; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2018), chapter 7.

⁶ European Commission (2019b).

7.1 The value of inbound degree students

From a knowledge-policy point of view, inbound degree students constitute a valuable resource for increased internationalisation of study environments in Norway. They can help Norway reach the goal that all Norwegian students shall be part of a learning environment that also includes international students. International full-degree students will be able to make an even greater contribution to internationalisation of the study environment, if compared to inbound international exchange students, since they stay in Norway longer. This can benefit the institutions, the academic communities and the vast majority of Norwegian students who do not go abroad during their studies.

Analyses and surveys nevertheless indicate that international students are an underutilised resource in this perspective.⁷ Norwegian institutions have come a long way in their efforts to make arrangements for and receive international students. However, it remains the case that there is often very limited contact between Norwegian and international students, and that the potential inherent in the international learning environment is not fully exploited. It is therefore important that the institutions work systematically to strengthen the interaction and contact between international and Norwegian students.

Degree students who stay on and work in Norway after graduation make a positive contribution to the Norwegian economy. International graduates are better equipped for work in Norway than other migrant workers, having already spent at least two years here. Many will also have learned some Norwegian, although most will have studied in English, and will be able to function more easily in a Norwegian work setting than people who have never been to Norway before. However, this potential value of international students who have completed a degree in Norway has largely been overlooked and overshadowed by other considerations.

Historically, Norway has attached political importance to trying to prevent the “brain drain”, i.e. emigration of highly educated individuals from their country of origin to another.⁸ In this area, however, there is a big difference between how Norway relates to its priority partner countries in respect of education and research policy on the

⁷ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019g).

one hand and developing countries in the Global South on the other.⁹ A national policy for the recruitment of students can take these kinds of differences into consideration. A more strategic, coordinated approach to recruiting international students must be based on a conscious balancing of knowledge and competence policy interests against aid and migration policy objectives.

7.1.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government wants the institutions to strengthen their work to create an international learning environment with systems to ensure the best possible interaction between Norwegian and international students in both academic and extracurricular contexts.

7.2 National policy to attract students to Norway

Norway demonstrates openness to international degree students by offering a wide range of master’s degrees in English and its system of full public funding of education for everyone – including students from non-EU/EFTA countries. Political priority has also been attached to international joint degrees, which also involve recruiting international students to degree courses, even though joint degrees will often comprise semester mobility between the participating institutions.¹⁰

However, no national targets or strategies have been designed for international degree students in Norway. In order to achieve a more coordinated national policy for the recruitment of international degree students, a good balance must be struck between different policy areas, and in the recruitment of international students, clear, coordinated signals must be conveyed.

7.2.1 Return versus staying on in Norway

Students from the EU and EFTA area who follow the teaching at an approved higher education

⁸ See, for example, the white paper Report no. 18 to the Storting (2007–2008) *Labour immigration*, chapter 14, and white paper Report no. 13 to the Storting (2008–2009) *Climate, conflict and capital. Norwegian development policy adapting to change*, chapter 3.4.

⁹ Brekke (2006).

¹⁰ The main idea behind the EU’s Erasmus Mundus programme was to create top-quality master’s degrees taught in English to attract the best students from all over the world.

institution in Norway are granted the right to reside and do not have to apply for a residence permit in Norway.¹¹ However, students who are going to study in Norway for more than three months must register with the immigration authorities. In addition, they must have health insurance and sufficient funds to cover their living expenses.

Students from non-EU/EFTA countries must apply for a student residence permit. This kind of student residence permits are granted under “*the precondition that the applicant will leave Norway on expiry of the residence permit*”.¹² The immigration authorities must assess the applicant’s “possibilities for returning”, i.e. the probability that the applicant will leave Norway upon expiry of the permit. This assessment will place emphasis on “both the applicant’s individual circumstances and the general situation in the applicant’s home country”.

However, the condition that the applicant will leave Norway when the residence permit expires is not absolute. The regulations have been relaxed several times since 2001, and now, under certain conditions, international students who complete a degree in Norway can apply to stay on in Norway for twelve months to find work or start their own business.¹³ By comparison, Germany gives international students who complete a degree in Germany three years to find work or start a business.

Germany, which, like Norway, does not take tuition fees from international students, wants to attract more students from all over the world and get them to stay on and work after graduation.¹⁴ This is part of Germany’s strategy to remain one of the most innovative and competitive knowledge economies in the world.

Many of the international degree students who come to Norway are considering or would like to remain in Norway after graduation and work, and the proportion has risen in recent years. In a survey from the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) among international students in 2019, as many as 70 per cent of the degree students expressed this view, compared with 62 per cent in 2016.¹⁵

¹¹ Norwegian Directorate of Immigration – UDI (2011).

¹² Norwegian Directorate of Immigration – UDI (2010)

¹³ According to the EU’s 2016 Directive on Students and Researchers, students shall have the right to stay for at least nine months after finishing their studies in order to look for a job or set up a business.

¹⁴ German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD (2019).

7.2.2 The right applicants?

In terms of quantity, the number of international degree students applying to study in Norway is satisfactory.¹⁶ However, a large number of applicants does not necessarily indicate that the institutions are managing to attract the students they aim to attract. The fact that Norway does not work strategically on attracting students may be a contributing factor in the institutions not getting the students they aim for, and that the inflow of international students is not aligned with Norway’s national geographical priorities or skills needs. Diku’s survey among Norwegian universities and university colleges reveals that the institutions do not necessarily perceive a large number of applicants as something of added value. The institutions would prefer stronger applicants and more applicants from the countries with which they have the most academic cooperation, not least from the EU and EFTA area.¹⁷ Strategic measures at the institutional level and clear national signals could help stake out a common course for the work.

There may be several reasons why Norway has to date attached less importance to recruiting international degree students than many other of our neighbouring countries.¹⁸ The fact that Norway does not have tuition fees may be one element; Norway’s strong economy may be another. In Sweden, where the number of students from outside Europe fell sharply after the country introduced tuition fees in 2011, both the education authorities and the higher education institutions themselves have regarded it as necessary to invest resources in developing and adopting a more active policy towards trying to restore the number of international students; for example, through increased marketing and scholarship programmes. However, some countries, including Germany, do not have tuition fees and at the same time have an active policy to attract international degree students.¹⁹

¹⁵ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019g).

¹⁶ «Many international students also come to Norway to take a full degree. Compared with other countries, Norwegian higher education institutions receive many applications from foreign applicants, especially for master’s degree programmes taught in English» (cf. Report no. 16 to the Storting (2016–2017) *Quality culture in higher education*, p. 65).

¹⁷ Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education – SIU (2018a).

¹⁸ British Council (2019), European Commission (2019b).

¹⁹ German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD (2019).

Norwegian internationalisation policy over the past ten years has rested on a foundation of cooperation between higher education institutions and measures to promote student exchange. Attracting degree students has not been an important political priority. Other countries' more proactive policies in this area are leading to increased competition for international degree students. Norway ought to adopt a clearer stance in order to be able to recruit the most attractive international students.

7.2.3 Recruitment in relation to Norway's skills needs

Almost half of the EU member states prioritise both attracting international students, especially degree students, and getting them to stay on after they have completed their degree.²⁰ A more targeted recruitment policy must be designed to meet needs across sectors and weigh up and rank multiple considerations: education and research policy (attracting the best students, or those from our priority partner countries); labour and industrial policy (innovative students, within certain subject areas, from countries that are important trade partners); immigration policy (avoiding student residence permits being exploited for other purposes, promoting certain types of labour immigration and preventing others); development aid policy (attracting and educating students, capacity building, preventing the brain drain); and foreign policy (networks and diplomatic relations in current and future partner countries).

This is not the first time the idea of a more active policy in this area has been launched. In the Strategy for Export and Internationalisation from 2017, the Government argued that student mobility, both inbound and outbound, ought to be regarded as a long-term investment in the further development of Norway as a knowledge nation.²¹ The strategy refers to a global race for “the brightest minds” and to recruit “the world's most talented students”. In this context, more targeted recruitment is seen both as an instrument in the long-term plan for research and education and the ambitions to build world-leading academic groups, and as a means to strengthen Norway's reputation and increase its attractiveness for foreign investment and businesses.²² Published by

the Ministry of Industry and Fisheries, the strategy is signed by six ministers – for industry, fisheries, foreign affairs, oil and energy, environment and climate, and education and research, respectively. Recruiting talented students to Norway and paving the way for them to work here during their studies and especially after graduation are important measures in respect of the skills and competencies Norway will require in the future.

7.2.4 Conclusions and measures

- The Government wants a clearer, more strategic national policy indicating which international degree students Norway should target, and will therefore create a working group that will consider a more deliberate policy towards international degree students at Norwegian institutions. This policy should build on overarching policies and frameworks regarding education and research, trade and industry, immigration, development aid and national security. The development of this kind of policy must take national needs for skills and competencies into consideration and involve non-academic players, such as the Ministry of Industry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the social partners (employer and employee organisations). The report will build on the overall national priorities specified in the long-term plan for research and education (cf. white paper Report no. 4 to the Storting (2018–2019)) and the strategy for export and internationalisation (cf. the Ministry of Industry and Fisheries 2017).
- The Government wants greater focus in the work to attract students on the opportunity to apply for a job or start up a business in Norway for one year after completing a degree. The Government encourages the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) and the higher education institutions to inform international degree students about this opportunity.

²⁰ European Commission (2019b).

²¹ Ministry of Industry and Fisheries (2017).

²² Report no. 4 to the Storting (2018–2019) *Long-term plan for research and higher education 2019–2028*.

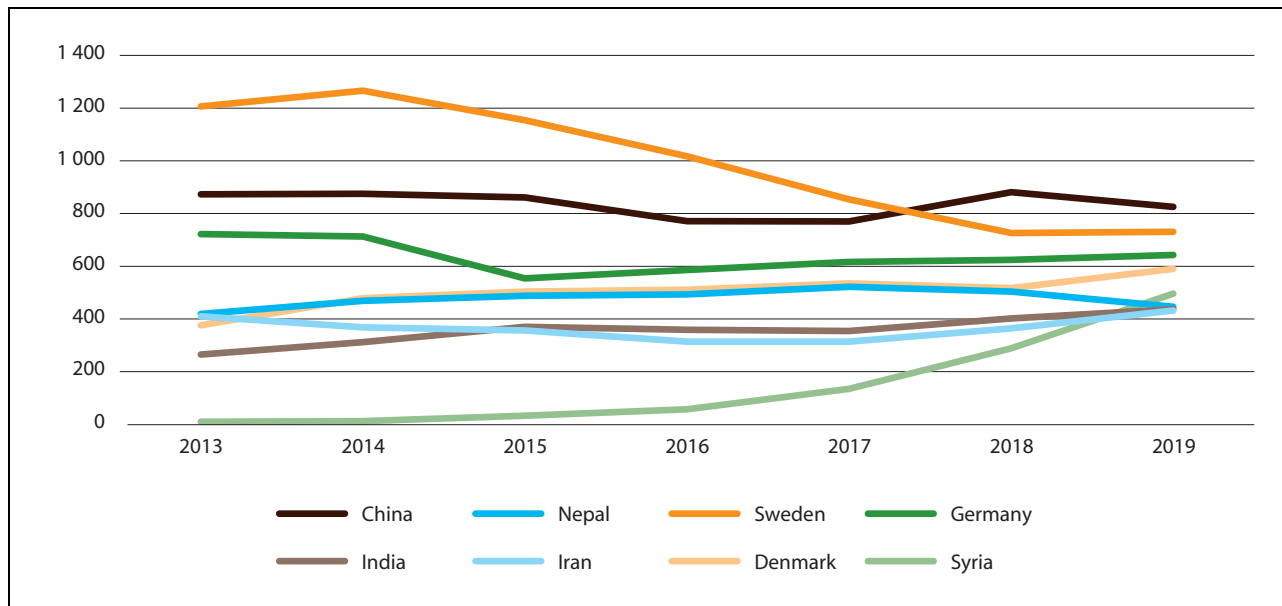


Figure 7.1 International degree students in Norway 2013–2018. The eight largest sender countries as per 2019

The figures include students who have upper secondary education from another country or non-Norwegian country background in Statistics Norway data or foreign nationality. The figures do not include exchange students and students who have lived in Norway for more than five years at the time of counting.

Source: Statistics Norway, education statistics

7.3 Number, origin and place of study

In 2015, four times as many foreign students came to Norway as in 2000. Some of these originally came to Norway for reasons other than to study; for example to work, as refugees, or as children of foreign parents. Even disregarding these, there has been strong growth in the numbers. Instead of figures for foreign nationals, figures are used (below) for what the OECD calls *international degree students*, which are students who are assumed to have come to Norway with the aim of studying for a degree. Exchange students and international degree students who have come to Norway for reasons other than studies are thus excluded.

After a slight decline from 2015 to 2017, the number of international degree students in Norway rose again in 2018 and 2019 to just over 12,300. Figure 7.1 shows the countries from which the most students come.²³

The number of degree students from Russia has also decreased, and has more than halved in the past five years. One explanation for this is the discontinuation of the Quota Scheme for students

from developing countries, countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which until 2015 included approximately 150 Russian students; in 2018, there were fewer than 20 people still in this scheme.²⁴ In 2018, there were just over 900 degree students from countries in Africa in Norway, unchanged from ten years earlier. This indicates that the Quota Scheme had limited impact on attracting students from African countries to Norway.

Table 7.1 shows the number of international degree students at Norwegian universities and university colleges. The University of Oslo (UiO) and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) receive by far the most international students: 1,844 and 2,093 respectively.

Most students (per 2019) come from China and Sweden, followed by Germany and Denmark. In 2015, Swedes made up the clear majority, but numbers have declined in the subsequent years. The decrease coincides with a parallel decline in labour immigration from Sweden. This is partly due to the decline in the unemployment rate in Sweden during the period.

²³ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2020b).

²⁴ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2018).

Table 7.1 International degree students in Norway, per institution 2013–2019 and as a proportion of the total number of students enrolled in 2019

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Internat. 2019 as % of total
Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO)	93	106	123	125	136	146	150	26%
Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH)	104	102	117	114	124	125	124	16%
Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO)	78	80	114	116	118	105	97	13%
MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society	66	57	209	225	228	189	154	12%
Sámi University of Applied Sciences	26	30	34	37	39	30	19	11%
Other university colleges ¹	273	329	286	243	276	303	392	9%
Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)	698	703	668	634	536	513	458	8%
University of Oslo (UiO)	1 793	1 829	1 903	1 900	1 871	1 910	1 844	7%
University of Stavanger (UiS)	669	711	750	742	836	809	786	7%
NHH Norwegian School of Economics	456	231	200	198	205	205	238	7%
University of Bergen (UiB)	823	854	890	878	941	955	1 058	6%
University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway (UiT)	1 045	1 111	1 164	950	1 005	956	915	6%
BI Norwegian Business School	883	876	865	829	923	992	1 018	5%
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)	2 175	2 474	1 877	1 990	1 968	1 982	2 093	5%
Nord University	547	494	571	695	639	524	434	4%
University of South-Eastern Norway (USN)	527	587	649	680	703	607	626	3%
Molde University College – Specialized University in Logistics (HiMolde)	64	98	101	87	101	127	81	3%
University of Agder (UiA)	261	251	284	280	254	329	349	3%
Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet)	525	607	538	509	465	478	545	3%
Norwegian Police University College	2	6	6	3	19	40	65	2%
Østfold University College (HiØ)	83	96	69	119	90	123	129	2%
Volda University College (HVO)	64	66	71	64	69	77	73	2%
VID Specialized University	85	89	96	77	69	72	78	2%
Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (HiNN)	162	196	234	250	261	219	223	2%
NLA University College	14	13	25	24	42	41	39	1%

Table 7.1 International degree students in Norway, per institution 2013–2019 and as a proportion of the total number of students enrolled in 2019

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Internat. 2019 as % of total
Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH)	20	34	25	20	25	21	14	1%
Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (DMMH)	5	5	9	8	3	6	18	1%
Kristiania University College (HK)	72	96	99	103	72	80	108	1%
Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL)	216	207	275	266	189	159	168	1%
Bjørknes University College	10	3	9	8	5	7	9	0%
Norwegian Defence University College (FHS)	7	7	10	5	4	5	1	0%
Total	11 846	12 348	12 271	12 179	12 216	12 135	12 306	

The figures include students who have upper secondary education from another country or non-Norwegian country background in Statistics Norway data or foreign nationality. The figures do not include exchange students and students who have lived in Norway for more than five years at the time of counting.

The table includes institutions that are in operation in 2019 or that have closed since 2013. Institutions that have been merged with other institutions or have changed names in the period 2013–2019 will be listed under the current (2019) institutional structure or name.

¹ Includes institutions that have ceased to exist during the period.

Source: Statistics Norway, education statistics

The specialised institutions have the most international students, in relative terms: Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO), the Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) and Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) have 26, 16 and 13 per cent respectively, while MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society and the Sámi University of Applied Sciences have just over 10 per cent.

The state and private university colleges have the lowest proportion of international degree students, with less than 2 per cent: Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), Kristiania University College (HK), Queen Maud University College of Early Childhood Education (DMMH), the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences (NIH) and NLA University College.

7.4 More strategic work to attract international degree students to Norway

In the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Research and Church Affairs' consider-

ation of the national budget for 2016, the majority asked the Government to “initiate work to establish a separate strategy for how Norway can attract skilled international degree students at the master’s level.”²⁵ One result of this process was the report, which the Ministry of Education and Research commissioned from the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU), now Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku)²⁶, and the Government wants the work on developing determined policy in this area to be continued.

²⁵ Recommendation no. 12 to the Storting (2015–2016) *Recommendation from the Standing Committee on Education, Research and Church Affairs on allocations via the national budget for 2016, chapters pertaining to the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Culture, and research chapters under the Ministry of Industry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (framework area 16)*, p. 71. The majority comprised the members from the Labour Party (Ap), the Christian Democratic Party (KrF), the Centre Party (Sp) and the Liberal Party (V).

²⁶ Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education – SIU (2018a).

International degree students ought to be recruited for academic reasons, such as on their academic merit and the objective of internationalising the study environment. At the same time, the needs of Norwegian employers and industry ought to be taken into account in discussions about Norway's objectives for attracting international degree students. This applies to how to strategically design the schemes for inbound degree students, in view of both the actual study period and what happens after graduation. Studies from other countries show that international students make a net contribution to the economy, even disregarding any tuition fees. This is mainly due to the fact that many of these students work during and after their studies.

7.4.1 Geographical priorities

An important distinction can be drawn between students from within and outside the EU and EFTA area. In practical terms, it is currently much easier for students from EU and EFTA countries to come to Norway to take an entire degree than it is for other students. Students from other countries face more stringent requirements regarding visas and residence permits, making the path from application to attendance longer, more uncertain and more costly, than it is for students from the EU and EFTA area. Nevertheless, 66 per cent of the current international degree students come from countries outside this area.²⁷ As mentioned above, some institutions want to attract more European students.

The Government wants master's degree students from EU and EFTA countries to make up a larger share of the international degree students in Norway. This will be in line with much of the input from the sector in connection with this white paper, and it may contribute to more people staying on and working in Norway after graduation, because it is much easier for people from the EU and EFTA area to both study and work in Norway. A more concentrated focus on Europe can be expected to strengthen both the higher education sector and Norway's international network and position in important partner countries, contributing to common European goals concerning the free circulation of labour.

However, it is not a goal that the mobility of degree students to Norway should be limited to

Europe and the EU and EFTA countries. Recruiting academically strong students from our priority partner countries outside Europe is an important measure to realise the goals relating to international cooperation on education and research expressed in, for example, the Panorama strategy.²⁸ In their consultation responses, several institutions express their desire to recruit more degree students from partner countries outside Europe.

An important reason why the Standing Committee on Education, Research and Church Affairs asked the Government to develop a strategy for recruitment was the discontinuation of the Quota Scheme and the start-up of NORPART. The change resulted in a reprioritisation from granting scholarships for full-degree studies to providing support for inbound exchange students as part of an institutional collaboration. Starting from 2020, money will once again be allocated to enable students from the Global South to take a degree in Norway, now through NORPART. This measure addresses a wish that large parts of the sector have expressed since the discontinuation of the Quota Scheme. Several institutions and academic communities stress that degree students from certain developing countries in the Global South are an important element in their work to internationalise their studies.

7.4.2 Proportion of international students in organised research training

In 2018, 42 per cent of the people who completed a doctoral degree in Norway had foreign nationality.²⁹ This is a new record and illustrates the significance of international recruitment to Norwegian academia. At the same time, there have been discussions about whether the proportion of overseas PhD students and doctoral candidates might be too high, especially in some subject areas. The highest share is in mathematical, natural science and technological subjects (i.e. STEM), where foreign nationals accounted for roughly two-thirds of the doctoral degrees completed in the years 2016–2018.

The Government holds that there should not be a national cap on the proportion of international PhD students, and that it must still be up to the individual institutions to assess who they want to employ, in line with the relevant legislation and

²⁷ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education – Diku (2019d). Calculated from the figures in table V2.37.

²⁸ Ministry of Education and Research (2015).

²⁹ Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education – NIFU (2019a).

regulations on, for example, employment within the EU and EFTA area.

7.4.3 Knowledge base and recruitment

A more targeted, knowledge-based recruitment strategy must be developed and continuously updated. What happens to international degree students after graduation? How many return home or move to other countries, how many stay in Norway, and how many of this latter group become active participants in Norwegian working life and business?³⁰ International students are a resource in Norwegian higher education, but they also make a contribution in other parts of society.³¹ More knowledge is needed about their impact on the Norwegian economy and labour market and for Norway's international relations.

7.4.4 Conclusions and measures

- The Government wants a greater proportion of the full-degree students who come to Norway to come from the EU and EFTA area and from Norway's priority partner countries outside Europe. Furthermore, the higher education institutions should use the opportunities inherent in cooperation programmes with the Global South in order to strengthen mobility and cooperation with developing countries in the Global South at master's degree level.
- The Government will consider conducting a socioeconomic analysis of the impact of international degree students on the Norwegian economy, employment and society, both during and after their studies. The analysis will also include the impact of international students on Norwegian higher education, including the role they play in internationalisation at home. It is also natural to consider whether such an analysis should be done on a regular basis and also include international PhD students.

³⁰ The Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education – NIFU is working on a research project that addresses these issues; see <https://www.nifu.no/projects/international-student-mobility-drivers-patterns-and-impacts-mobility/>.

³¹ Cf. the references in chapter 3 to these kinds of analyses done in other European countries.

7.5 Welcome to Norway

A recent study conducted by the British Council of eleven European countries found that the easier it is for international students to come (assessed on how easy it is to get a student visa, post-study work opportunities and scholarships), the more the student inflow to the country increases.³² In other words, national policies on recruitment and getting graduates to stay have a major impact on how many international students come and how many stay.³³

7.5.1 Residence permit requirements

Students from non-EU/EFTA countries must apply for a student residence permit if they want to study in Norway for more than three months.³⁴ The applicant must have been admitted to a full-time study programme at an approved Norwegian higher education institution. In order to renew their residence permit, the student must be able to demonstrate “satisfactory progress” in their studies. In 2019, the processing fee for an application for a student residence permit was NOK 5,300; however, in the national budget for 2020 it was reduced by NOK 400. Students must pay this processing fee each year when they renew their residence permit, and if they apply for a recent graduate residence permit to seek work as a skilled worker after graduation. In order to qualify for a residence permit, the student must also have secured housing, which most people have covered through the higher education institutions' housing guarantee for international students. In their consultation responses to this white paper, several institutions report that they experience this application processing fee as an obstacle to recruitment.

Students from non-EU/EFTA countries must meet the so-called “means of subsistence requirement”, which means that they must document that they have the necessary financial means for subsistence for the entire duration of the residence permit. For the 2019–2020 academic year, the requirement was NOK 121,000, which is the same amount as the basic support that Norwegian students receive. The Government is not planning to change this.

³² British Council (2019). The 11 countries included in the study are France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Russia, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Poland, Ireland, Italy and Spain.

³³ European Commission (2019b).

³⁴ Norwegian Directorate of Immigration – UDI (2010)

Another aspect of the residence permit is the processing time, which makes the process from admission to a study programme to start-up considerably longer for students from countries outside the EU/EFTA area. A long application processing time can cause problems for the students, or result in them deciding to study elsewhere while their application is still being processed because they receive confirmation that they can study in another country in the meantime. A coordinated admissions system for international students applying for master's degree studies in Norway may shorten the processing time for applications for a place on a programme. This is discussed in more detail below. In order to take full advantage of this, it is also important that the application process for a residence permit is efficient, so that the institutions do not lose good applicants to other countries due to long processing times.

As a result of the need for a residence permit, and because it often takes a long time for prospective students to meet all the conditions and have their application processed, the institutions lose good applicants and students from countries outside the EU and EFTA area. Norway must be at least as great as countries Norway competes with at attracting international degree students.

Under certain conditions, international degree students who have come to Norway from a country outside the EU and EFTA area may leave Norway to go on exchange abroad in a third country without this affecting their residence permit. Given that most of the education is taken in Norway, holiday breaks in their home country and study mobility to another country ought not to create problems for the residence permit.

7.5.2 Admission to joint master's degree programmes for international students

The institutions currently spend a lot of time verifying and approving qualifications issued by foreign educational institutions. This requires specialist expertise and good knowledge of some of the countries the applicants come from, as well as language proficiencies. The Government wants to establish a joint admissions system for international master's degree students where the basis for admission to Norwegian higher education is assessed centrally and only once per applicant. Many of the institutions confirm in their consultation responses that this will free up resources at the institutions, enabling them to spend more time attracting the students they want, or concen-

trate more on other types of student mobility. A joint system for admission to master's degrees for international students will also make it easier to promote Norwegian higher education – for example, through a joint deadline for applications. Furthermore, an admissions system of this nature would yield useful data and statistics about international students in Norway, applicants, and the interest in studying in Norway internationally.

The Government points out that a joint project has been established between the Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services in Higher Education and Research (Unit) and higher education institutions with an ambition of establishing a joint master's degree admissions system for all students. The Government will set up a joint system for admission of international students to master's degree programmes at the first opportunity. The work must be coordinated with the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) with regard to information, marketing and data collection for international students. The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) must be involved in view of their role in assessing the level and authenticity of foreign higher education, as well as NOKUT's responsibility for maintaining the GSU list (Higher Education Entrance Qualification for foreign applicants).

7.5.3 Use of Norwegian and use of English

As a small-language nation, Norway must offer courses and degrees in English in order to be able to attract international students in significant numbers. This has been a political priority for several decades, and the institutions currently offer a wide range of courses in English, including more than three hundred master's degrees. By contrast, there are only a dozen or so degrees at bachelor's level taught in English. As discussed in chapter 5, the Government does not want to increase the overall use of English as a language of instruction in higher education in Norway, but the Government does want the higher education institutions to make conscious choices about the language of instruction. Although international students cannot be expected to master Norwegian as a language of instruction, and courses and programmes taught in English are therefore a prerequisite for attracting degree students, the institutions ought to offer Norwegian lessons and encourage international degree students to learn some Norwegian. If international students do not

learn any Norwegian at all, it becomes more difficult for them to integrate into the academic environment on campus during their studies, and not least to work in Norway after graduation.

7.5.4 Conclusions and measures

- The Government wants the work to set up a joint system for admission of international students to master's degree programmes to start as soon as possible.

7.6 Profiling Norway as a knowledge nation

The Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) has an overarching responsibility for profiling Norwegian higher education abroad, while the institutions themselves are responsible for recruiting international students. Through its *Study in Norway* website, Diku and the institutions provide information about courses and programmes offered in English.³⁵ Strategic marketing aimed at international master's degree students has not previously been a priority, but it can be stepped up as part of a more targeted policy to attract students in line with geographical and other priorities.

Unlike Norway, our neighbours Finland, Sweden and Denmark have political frameworks defining how the country is to be profiled as a knowledge nation. In Finland, the objectives have been included in the work on recruitment to form a national strategy that encompasses several policy areas and ministries. The recruitment of “talents” is linked to growth, internationalisation and innovation in the Finnish labour market. In Sweden too, recruitment work is included in the profiling of Sweden as a knowledge nation.

7.6.1 Overarching objectives and priorities

Several of our neighbouring countries have changed the emphasis in their national profiling work, in line with recent years' international developments. The Government supports the call voiced by many of the institutions in their consultation responses for a coordinated, central profiling of Norway as an education nation, as this could provide national momentum to their own

³⁵ www.studyinnorway.no

local work to attract international students. The overarching objectives and priorities for the coming years ought to be reviewed, and it must be clarified to what extent international degree students are to be prioritised in the national profiling work. Some general guidelines already exist, in the Government's Strategy for Export and Internationalisation (2017)³⁶ and in the Long-Term Plan for Research and Higher Education (2018).³⁷

7.6.2 National alumni network

It may be appropriate to establish a national alumni network for international students, with a view to promoting Norway as a knowledge nation, developing Norway's network of international contacts, and the work to establish overseas traineeships. Some networks of this nature already exist at the individual institutions. Noralumni is a platform in Norway for alumni networks run by the Research Council of Norway (NFR) and Innovation Norway. Noralumni networks already exist for China and Japan. A number of other countries have also established alumni networks, often associated with national scholarship schemes.

7.6.3 Conclusions and measures

- The Government wants to establish a working group consisting of the Ministry of Education and Research (secretariat), other relevant ministries, and national stakeholders such as the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), the Research Council of Norway (NFR), and Innovation Norway, in addition to the institutions. The working group will be responsible for proposing overarching objectives and priorities for the profiling of Norway as a knowledge nation abroad, in line with the relevant overall policy objectives.
- The Government will assess the pertinence of establishing a national alumni network for international students. This will involve, among other things, mapping the institutions' existing alumni work and assessing whether establishment of a national network can strengthen the work of profiling Norway as a knowledge nation and the work of establishing traineeships abroad.

³⁶ Ministry of Industry and Fisheries (2017).

³⁷ Report no. 4 to the Storting (2018–2019) *Long-term plan for research and higher education 2019–2028*.

8 Norwegian full-degree students abroad

Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad are an important element in Norway's education policy. They also play an important role in the Norwegian labour market, supplementing workers who have graduated from a Norwegian institution. In addition to having unique specialist expertise, they also supply the labour market with the necessary skilled workforce in specific areas. In addition, the fact that Norway has a number of full-degree students abroad can help Norway achieve the targets set in terms of international student mobility. Around six per cent of Norwegian students take a full degree abroad, and most of these fully reap the positive effects that student mobility has on the individual level, such as personal development, general moral, social and cultural education, and foreign language skills. Norway has therefore established an educational support scheme that is very favourable for Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad, especially weighed up against the educational support in comparable countries. Educational support can also be used as an effective tool to implement Norway's chosen policies, such as increased international mobility among Norwegian students, better foreign language skills, intercultural competence, and in-depth knowledge about specific countries.

8.1 What is the value of Norwegian full-degree students abroad?

Chapter 3 deals with the positive effects of international student mobility and the targets Norway has set for this kind of mobility. With regard to Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad, it is primarily the positive effects for the students themselves and for society in general that are the most relevant. The higher education institutions will have little benefit from Norwegian students taking a full degree abroad, as Norwegian higher education institutions are scarcely involved in this form of student mobility, compared with their involvement in connection with periods of study or training abroad.

In terms of the positive effects for the individual student, however, this form of overseas stay has

much greater potential than stays that last only one semester or less. This applies in particular to effects such as personal development, general moral, social and cultural education, and general skills, as well as intercultural competence and foreign language skills. As a general rule, the longer the overseas stay lasts, the stronger these effects will be. Students who take a full degree abroad may also experience positive effects in terms of academic learning outcomes and motivation, but this will depend more on the individual institution and the quality of the teaching and the academic environment there. Taking a full degree abroad will also usually make the student more attractive in the labour market. In addition, some of the Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad return with relevant work experience from the country of study. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

This last factor is an aspect of full-degree mobility that can yield positive effects for society in general. Full-degree students will acquire in-depth knowledge about the country they study in, and they will have networks, relations and a connection to the country that can be valuable to Norwegian society in general, employers and industry. Further, Norwegian graduates with a full degree from abroad will be able to supply the Norwegian labour market and business sector with in-demand skills and ability to innovate. Some parts of the Norwegian business sector may also need more people with qualifications in a specific area or profession than Norway is able to supply, due to limited numbers of places on programmes of study. Graduates who have taken a full degree abroad and who return to Norway to work will thus help bridge this gap.

8.2 Overview with figures from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund

8.2.1 Number of Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad

Table 8.1 provides an overview of the number of students who have taken a full degree abroad each year in the period 2010–2011 to 2019–2020.

Table 8.1 Number of full-degree students abroad per year in the period 2010–2011 to 2019–2020, and the relative change (%)

	2010– 2011	2011– 2012	2012– 2013	2013– 2014	2014– 2015	2015– 2016	2016– 2017	2017– 2018	2018– 2019	2019– 2020	Change (%)
Full-degree students	14 154	15 328	16 260	16 910	17 482	17 468	16 957	16 635	15 941	15 364	9%
Change (%)	9.2%	8.3%	6.1%	3.9%	3.4%	-0.1%	-2.9%	-1.9%	-4.2%	-3.6%	

Source: Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen)

During this ten-year period, the annual number of people who have taken a full degree abroad has increased by nine per cent. In the last five years, between 15,000 and 17,500 students have taken a full degree abroad each year. There was a steady increase in the first part of the ten-year period, which has been followed by a marked decline since the peak year 2014–2015. The relative increase in the ten-year period as a whole is lower than the increase in the student population in the same period (30 per cent). The increase in the period is also smaller than the corresponding increase in the number of students who have had a learning period abroad (47 per cent).

8.2.2 How many of the full-degree students abroad pay tuition fees?

Table 8.2 provides an overview of the number and share of Norwegian full-degree students abroad who paid tuition fees for their education, in the period from 2010–2011 to 2019–2020. In this ten-year period, the share has remained stable at between 70 and 80 per cent of the total number of full-degree students, but the table shows that the proportion has risen by about two percentage points during the period. The year-on-year

increase has been fairly stable, with the exception of a slight decrease in the academic years 2013–2014, 2017–2018 and 2019–2020.

Table 8.3 provides an overview of the total number of sums paid by the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) to cover tuition fees for Norwegian full-degree students abroad, the average cost per student who has to pay tuition fees, and the relative change for the period 2010–2011 to 2019–2020 (as a percentage). Total expenditure has risen by 54 per cent in the ten-year period, and has increased each year, except in the 2016–2017 academic year, and the last two years. During the same period, the number of full-degree students abroad who pay tuition fees has increased by 11 per cent. The sharp drop in the value of the Norwegian krone in summer 2014 contributed to the jump in expenditure seen in the following two academic years. The weakening of the Norwegian krone also meant that a greater number of students from Norway studying abroad had to cover tuition fees themselves beyond the support they received from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen). Since the introduction of an additional loan of up to NOK 100,000 from autumn 2017, fewer students have had to find alternative ways of funding their studies.

Table 8.2 Number and share of full-degree students who pay tuition fees abroad per year in the period 2010–2011 to 2019–2020 and the change in percentage points

	2010– 2011	2011– 2012	2012– 2013	2013– 2014	2014– 2015	2015– 2016	2016– 2017	2017– 2018	2018– 2019	2019– 2020	
Pay tuition fees	10 403	11 358	12 226	12 569	13 351	13 513	13 192	12 881	12 252	11 533	
Full-degree students	14 154	15 328	16 260	16 910	17 482	17 468	16 957	16 635	15 941	15 364	
Share	73%	74%	75%	74%	76%	77%	78%	77%	77%	75%	
Change in percentage points (pp)	1 pp	1 pp	1 pp	-1 pp	2 pp	1 pp	1 pp	-1 pp	0 pp	-2 pp	

Source: Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen)

Table 8.3 Total amounts paid for tuition fees for Norwegian full-degree students abroad, and the average cost per student paying tuition fees per year in the period 2010–2011 to 2019–2020 in NOK and the relative change (%)

	2010– 2011	2011– 2012	2012– 2013	2013– 2014	2014– 2015	2015– 2016	2016– 2017	2017– 2018	2018– 2019	2019– 2020
Total number of expenses for tuition fees paid ¹	923	1 052	1 177	1 208	1 388	1 482	1 426	1 491	1 424	1 418
Average cost per student	88 693	92 612	96 247	96 128	103 999	109 656	108 080	115 716	116 198	122 971
Change in total expenditure	10%	14%	12%	3%	15%	7%	-4%	4%	-4%	0%
Change in average cost	-1%	4%	4%	0%	8%	5%	-1%	7%	0%	6%

¹ In NOK millions.

Source: Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen). In CPI-adjusted 2019 kroner

Table 8.4 Full-degree students per country and per year in the period 2010–2011 to 2010–2019, and the relative change (%)

Country	2010– 2011	2011– 2012	2012– 2013	2013– 2014	2014– 2015	2015– 2016	2016– 2017	2017– 2018	2018– 2019	2019– 2020	Change (%)
United Kingdom	3 527	4 139	4 657	5 023	5 296	5 077	4 569	4 327	4 059	3 887	10%
Denmark	2 529	2 748	2 791	2 816	2 772	2 774	2 531	2 454	2 369	2 409	-5%
USA	1 255	1 441	1 650	1 834	2 096	2 096	1 974	1 910	1 858	1 751	40%
Poland	1 383	1 478	1 521	1 530	1 571	1 614	1 555	1 528	1 538	1 580	14%
Hungary	751	802	814	863	959	1 004	1 045	949	873	767	2%
Australia	1 446	1 329	1 189	1 083	982	926	909	906	847	713	-49%
Sweden	750	735	772	673	674	573	604	628	602	514	-31%
The Netherlands	361	372	387	385	379	406	451	519	599	614	70%
Slovakia	307	353	455	538	560	551	580	611	576	543	77%
Germany	205	219	227	238	235	221	248	279	316	318	55%
Spain	107	118	136	146	196	278	263	304	289	357	234%
Czech Republic	257	289	313	350	352	337	312	284	246	211	-18%
France	240	253	251	256	221	262	253	224	206	194	-19%
Latvia	73	103	124	115	168	165	180	180	191	188	158%
Indonesia								207	190	144	-30% ¹
Canada	163	145	140	156	143	160	165	154	149	137	-16%
Italy	61	73	88	87	80	88	92	94	102	107	75%

¹ Does not apply to the entire period.

The overview only includes countries with at least 100 Norwegian full-degree students in 2019–2020.

Source: Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen)

8.2.3 Which countries do they go to?

As regards which countries they prefer to study in, Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad largely have the same preferences as the students who have a shorter learning period abroad during their studies. The English-speaking countries of the United Kingdom, USA and Australia are also among the most popular destinations for full-degree students. Higher education institutions in the United Kingdom are the most frequent destination by a wide margin. These institutions have also experienced a 10 per cent increase in the number of Norwegian full-degree students in the past ten years, although the figure has decreased by 27 per cent since the peak year of 2014–2015. The USA is getting closer to second place and has almost doubled the number of Norwegian full-degree students during the period, despite a decline in recent years. Denmark's popularity has remained stable throughout the period. Australia was previously in the top three, but has experienced a decline of almost 50 per cent over the ten-year period.

The typical destination countries for Norwegian students who take a full degree in health

subjects, Poland and Hungary, have also seen an increase in Norwegian full-degree students during the period, of 14 and 2 per cent respectively, and these countries have consistently been among the most popular destinations.

Most of the countries in table 8.4 have seen a proportional increase from 2009 to 2020, although numbers have decreased for the vast majority of countries, and especially those with the most Norwegian students, since the peak year 2014–2015. Latvia, Spain, Slovakia, the Netherlands and Italy saw the largest increases in the period. Australia, Sweden, Canada, France, Denmark and Czech Republic have all experienced a decline in the period.

8.2.4 What subjects do the Norwegian full-degree students study abroad?

Table 8.5 shows the development from 2010–2011 to 2019–2020 in the subject areas that the Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad study. Throughout the period, by far the highest number of Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad study health and social care subjects.

Table 8.5 Subject area for Norwegian full-degree students abroad. Number per subject and per year in the period 2010–2011 to 2019–2020 and relative change (%)

Subject area	2010– 2011	2011– 2012	2012– 2013	2013– 2014	2014– 2015	2015– 2016	2016– 2017	2017– 2018	2018– 2019	2019– 2020	Change (%)
Health and social care subjects	4 601	4 865	5 084	5 125	5 202	5 208	5 068	4 890	4 794	4 729	3
Economic and administrative subjects	2 631	2 967	3 248	3 610	3 775	3 801	3 554	3 401	3 175	2 953	12
Social sciences and law	2 407	2 730	2 982	3 119	3 191	3 271	3 174	3 101	2 988	2 988	24
Natural sciences and technology	1 469	1 547	1 607	1 743	1 846	2 054	2 149	2 219	2 205	2 185	40
Humanities and aesthetic subjects	2 313	2 436	2 456	2 461	2 435	2 355	2 100	1 962	1 930	1 828	-21
Subject area not specified	195	166	253	333	347	454	621	657	449	236	21
Researcher	171	182	184	-	185	188	191	258	274	302	77
Teacher education and education science	112	111	102	99	98	93	103	105	107	98	-13
Primary industry	33	46	48	56	41	44	34	42	44	45	36

Source: Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen)

Box 8.1 Association of Norwegian Students Abroad

The Association of Norwegian Students Abroad (ANSA) is an interest organisation for Norwegian students abroad. ANSA receives public support and offers services for students from Norway studying abroad both before they leave, during their studies, and after graduation.

Before studies abroad

Advice and information

ANSA's Information Centre is a nationwide, publicly supported information service that offers free, unbiased guidance on the opportunities to study abroad. The Information Centre does not represent any particular nations or universities, nor does it make recommendations on overseas institutions. Many of the services are online. Through its "Discover the World" project, ANSA has brought approved agents, representatives from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) and other relevant actors to upper secondary schools to inform pupils about the possibility of studying abroad. ANSA also works specifically towards Norway's priority partner countries through, among other things, promotion of Germany as a country of study, visits to Chinese classes to recommend China as a country of study, interviews with students in the Panorama countries, etc.

ANSA approves providers

ANSA has launched a code of conduct for providers of studies and schooling abroad. These include requirements for how the providers should quality assure the guidance and follow-up of the students and pupils. The code of conduct also contains guidelines on the education provider's obligations and requirements in relation to business practices and personal conduct. Several providers of studies and schooling abroad now have routines that are in line with this code of conduct.

During the studies

Counselling

In 2018, for the first time, the national survey on students' health and well-being (SHoT) also

included students from Norway studying abroad. In the survey, 14 per cent of the students studying abroad responded that they had slightly below average quality of life, 10 per cent said they had poor or very poor quality of life, 16 per cent said they had serious mental health problems, and 11 per cent said they had multiple serious mental health problems. At the same time, 71 per cent of the students studying abroad with multiple serious ailments said that they had not sought help. In part against this backdrop, ANSA received NOK 760,000 in 2018 for work on mental health services for students from Norway studying abroad, and ANSA now offers free counselling with a psychologist to Norwegian students abroad on an equal basis with the services available to students at Norwegian higher education institutions.

Social adviser

ANSA has a social adviser who has a strict duty of confidentiality. The social adviser is open to all kinds of inquiries and is a service for members who do not necessarily want to talk to a psychologist.

Emergency response

ANSA has an emergency response team that establishes contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Church Abroad (Sjømannskirken) and other relevant bodies in the event of acute incidents abroad. ANSA often has local representatives through its elected representatives at overseas institutions. Many of the elected representatives have received training in emergency response.

Network abroad

ANSA has 27 so-called "ANSA countries", each of which has a separate national committee. Some of the ANSA countries also have local chapters, and there was a total of 110 local chapters in 2018. Both the national committees and the local chapters are made up of volunteers who arrange social and academic events for students from Norway studying abroad.

Box 8.1 (cont.)

*After the studies**Careers advice*

The vast majority of people who study abroad want to return to Norway to work and settle down, and ANSA is working to ascertain the value of international competence in general. ANSA has a careers advice service that aims to facilitate the transition to working life in Norway

for students who study abroad. Each year they arrange career days both in Norway and abroad where students can meet potential employers, and they also arrange courses on writing CVs and applications and offer careers advice. ANSA also hosts “Juvenarte” every year, an exhibition where Norwegian art and design students who have taken all or part of their education abroad can showcase their work in Norway.

However, the increase in this category has been relatively flat compared with the increase in the other most popular subject areas. There has been an increase of more than 10 per cent in economic and administrative subjects, social sciences and law, as well as in natural science and technology in the period.

There has been a decrease in the humanities and aesthetic subjects and teacher education and education science, but it should be noted that the subject area teacher education and education science has far fewer students than most of the other subject areas in the table.

The number of students who have taken a full degree abroad within the primary industries has increased over the period.

8.3 Educational support for Norwegian full-degree students abroad

8.3.1 Educational support

Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad are an important part of Norway’s education policy and the Norwegian workforce. At the same time, there are high expenses associated with the educational support these students receive. It is therefore only appropriate to try to optimise the use of these funds so they yield the greatest returns, also with regard to national needs and interests in a broader perspective. Due to the introduction of a variety of measures at different times to achieve different specific objectives, the educational support scheme is currently somewhat uncoordinated. The system can be difficult for students to navigate and it can be hard to find out how much money they will actually receive in loans and grants for studies in different countries and at different institutions.

Under the current regulations for the 2019–2020 academic year, an additional grant can be awarded for education at 141 overseas institutions. However, the students only qualify for the additional grant if the tuition fees are higher than NOK 133,752 for an entire academic year. This means that education at some overseas institutions does not trigger the right to an additional grant because the tuition fees are not high enough. It is largely education in English-speaking countries that can qualify students for the additional grant, while education in priority, non-anglophone partner countries does not generally qualify for the additional grant. More Norwegian students ought to take education in Norway’s priority partner countries, in part with a view to Norway gaining greater range in Norwegian students’ language and cultural skills, and the funds from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) are a key strategic tool to achieve this.

It should be assessed whether the current educational support system is designed to help achieve the goals the Government has set for student mobility, including the goal of getting more students to study in Norway’s priority partner countries. At the same time, it is important to ensure that the different components are coordinated and transparent, also for the students. The Government will therefore consider reviewing the educational support scheme for students abroad.

Some Norwegian citizens receive support for tuition fees (in addition to basic support) to study at “for profit” institutions abroad. These are institutions that pay dividends to their shareholders. They constitute only a small segment of the private institutions, as most private institutions are not “for profit”. In most private institutions, any profits are ploughed back into the institution, to the benefit of the employees and students. The

Universities and University Colleges Act¹ states that private universities and university colleges that receive state support “must use the support and fees to benefit the students. Private universities and university colleges that receive state support must not distribute proceeds” (section 8-3, third paragraph). In other words, in Norway parts of a state subsidy cannot be paid out as dividends or profit. It is unfortunate that one consequence of the system may be that the support that the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) provides to individual students to cover tuition fees can be a source of earnings for foreign “for profit” institutions. At the same time, there is no clear boundary between “for profit” and “not for profit” institutions. The extent of support for students at overseas “for profit” institutions ought therefore to be investigated, and the Government will consider whether to introduce new restrictions concerning the types of institutions that qualify students for support. Students who have already started on a degree programme at a “for profit” institution will nevertheless be allowed to complete their studies with the same support for tuition fees as they currently receive.

8.3.1.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government finds that the funding from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) for Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad ought to be used more strategically. This applies especially in respect of the quality of the universities the students choose, which countries the universities are in, and the cost level of the universities.
- The Government wants to make changes to the regulations governing the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) in order to increase student mobility to Norway’s priority partner countries, and will return to the budgetary implications in the work on the annual national budgets.
- The Government wants more Norwegian full-degree students to choose to study in Norway’s priority partner countries for cooperation on higher education and research.
- The Government wants more full-degree students to choose study countries with lower tuition costs, to limit the level of debt among these students.

- The Government will consider reviewing the educational support schemes for students abroad with a view to making them more uniform and transparent. Educational support ought to be designed such that it ensures that more students choose studies in Norway’s priority partner countries in the education field, and in this context it will also be relevant to review the grant for language courses for studying abroad.
- The Government will look at the correlation between the information needs and the currently available information regarding the debt consequences in connection with choice of place of study, and about the actual level of support (grant–loan ratio) when applying for support. Possible information measures that address any mismatch will then be assessed.
- The Government will map out the scope of support for students at “for-profit” institutions and look at the possibility of introducing new limitations in the scheme that allows Norwegian full-degree students studying at these kinds of institutions abroad to receive support for tuition fees.

8.3.2 Norwegian educational support compared with the support in selected countries

Below is an overview of the educational support in Norway compared with the support in a number of selected countries – Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands and Germany. Examples have been included of both the educational support for exchange students and the educational support for Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad, in order to ensure a comprehensive picture.

8.3.2.1 Assumptions and simplifications used in the calculations in the examples

- All amounts have been calculated according to the individual country’s regulations for the 2018–2019 academic year.
- The support amounts have been converted from foreign currency to Norwegian kroner using the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund’s (Lånekassen) exchange rates for the academic year 2018–2019.
- The support amounts have been rounded off to the nearest krone.
- Pursuant to the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund’s (Lånekassen) regulations, the

¹ Act no. 15 of 1 April 2005 relating to universities and university colleges.

support for tuition fees can be adjusted according to the fluctuations in foreign exchange rates. In the examples below, however, we have assumed no exchange rate adjustment.

- Pursuant to the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund's (Lånkassen) regulations, some grants are means-tested against income, wealth and social security benefits. The examples are based on the assumption that the grants are not reduced.
- The support amounts have not been adjusted for purchasing power.
- The examples do not take into account the different country's repayment systems.

8.3.2.2 Examples

Example 1

Christian is 23 years old and is taking a bachelor's degree. He wants to spend an autumn semester (five months) in France as an exchange student. He must pay EUR 4,000 in tuition fees, and he will

not live with his parents in France. How much can Christian receive in educational support? See table 8.6.

Example 2

Nadia is 22 years old and unmarried. She wants to take a three-year bachelor's degree in the United Kingdom. She will not be living with her parents in the United Kingdom. She will have to pay tuition fees of GBP 10,000 per year. How much can Nadia receive in support for the entire bachelor's degree? See table 8.7.

Example 3

Lise is 28 years old, married, and has one child. She wants to take a two-year master's degree in the USA. She and her husband and child will move to the USA. The education costs USD 25,000 in tuition fees per year. How much support Lise can get for the entire master's degree? See table 8.8.

Table 8.6 Example 1 – loan–grant ratio (figures in NOK)

Amount received	Denmark	Sweden	Finland	Iceland	The Netherlands	Germany	Norway	Norway ¹
Loan	30 899	94 751	32 572	108 656	61 604	20 501	48 880	48 880
Grant	67 366	16 028	27 796	0	23 562	58 822	46 029	67 395
Total	98 265	110 779	60 368	108 656	85 166	79 323	94 909	116 275

¹ The example shows a support scheme for students who go on an exchange in a non-anglophone country, who take a language course, and who meet the conditions for a language grant.

Table 8.7 Example 2 – loan–grant ratio (figures in NOK)

Amount received	Denmark	Sweden	Finland	Iceland	The Netherlands	Germany	Norway
Loan	137 960	641 685	144 085	634 944	437 906	134 859	443 688
Grant	269 623	89 296	181 902	0	160 223	178 928	245 603
Total	407 583	730 981	325 987	634 944	598 129	313 787	689 291

Table 8.8 Example 3 – loan–grant ratio (figures in NOK)

Amount received	Denmark	Sweden	Finland	Iceland	The Netherlands	Germany	Norway	Norway ¹
Loan	271 794	424 270	92 352	708 773	283 351	–	457 734	332 231
Grant	285 324	61 713	137 906	0	103 674	–	236 293	361 796
Total	557 118	485 983	230 258	708 773	387 025	–	694 027	694 027

¹ This example shows the distribution between the loan component and the grant component for education at an institution that is on the additional grant list.

8.3.2.3 *Comparison of Norwegian educational support with the corresponding support in selected countries*

Measured against comparable countries, the Norwegian educational support scheme is very generous for both full-degree students and exchange students. Both the examples pertaining to full-degree students shows that a Norwegian student receives the highest or second highest educational support. In addition, the size of the grant is consistently highest or second highest for Norwegian students, compared with the grant for students from the other countries.

Additionally, it is worth noting the following:

- Full-degree students fare particularly well in the Norwegian scheme.
- The Norwegian educational support scheme, which provides access to an additional grant for education at certain foreign institutions and an additional loan for education at all foreign institutions, is generous.
- Norwegian students can end up with a high debt burden.
- Applicants who receive support from others for tuition fees receive reduced loans and grants from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen). The loan is reduced first, as applicable followed by the grant component. This can help reduce the debt burden.
- The German educational support scheme is not based on universal principles.

8.3.2.4 *Conclusions and measures*

- The Government finds that the educational support in Norway is very good for Norwegian students, both in its own right and measured against the support available to students in comparable countries. Educational support can also be used as an effective tool to implement Norway's policies, such as increased international mobility among Norwegian students, better foreign language skills, intercultural competence, and in-depth knowledge about specific countries. It is also designed to help Norwegian students receive a good, relevant education.
- The Government wants more students to choose study countries and study destinations with lower tuition costs, to reduce the level of debt among full-degree students. It is a known challenge that students who take a full degree at foreign institutions that charge high tuition fees end up with large debts after graduation.

- Students must be aware of their responsibilities when choosing a place of study. When choosing where to study, students must take into account factors such as quality, suitability and relevance, but it is equally important that they also take the cost of the studies into account.

8.4 **Targets for Norwegian students abroad, including full-degree students**

The targets set for international student mobility that 20 per cent (Bologna Process) and 50 per cent (Quality Report) of students shall have a learning period abroad during their studies are a guiding principle for the measures proposed in this white paper. However, no specific target has been set for the number of Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad. The ambition of this white paper is to get more Norwegian students to have a learning period abroad during their studies, not necessarily to take a full degree overseas. If Norway is to attain the target of 20 per cent student mobility and get anywhere close to the target set in the Quality Report, the greatest potential lies in getting more of the students who do not currently have any form of mobility stay at all during their studies to go abroad.

Furthermore, the main argument for strengthening the internationalisation of the Norwegian higher education institutions, and to this end getting more Norwegian students to go overseas on a mobility stay, is to strengthen the quality, relevance and attractiveness of Norwegian higher education institutions. There are many positive effects of a student taking an entire degree at a foreign higher education institution. However, these are mostly relevant to the student's own development, and the positive effects this can have for society and the economy. The Government finds that mobility stays that are well integrated into study programmes, and which are part of a larger internationalisation process at the institution, contribute most to strengthening the quality, relevance and attractiveness of Norwegian higher education institutions.

8.4.1 **Conclusions and measures**

- The Government holds that the target figures for international student mobility ought to include all study programmes culminating in a degree, and that students who take a full

degree abroad ought also to be included in the calculation of the mobility rate.

- The Government will not introduce separate targets for the number and/or proportion of Norwegian students who take a full degree abroad in this white paper. However, the Government will ensure that the statistics will consistently also include Norwegian full-degree students abroad, so that they are included in the results used to assess the extent to which Norway has reached the “Bologna target” and the target set in the Quality Report.

8.5 Student mobility forum

Excellent, relevant information about studying abroad is an important tool to help students make sound choices regarding their studies. In 2015, the Ministry of Education and Research established a working group to look at models for how actors in the education sector can work together to provide more coordinated information to students who are planning to study abroad. The

group consists of representatives of the Association of Norwegian Students Abroad (ANSA), the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), the Directorate of Health, the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) and Universities Norway (UHR) and is led by Diku. The Ministry of Education and Research is currently reviewing which members will continue to participate in the group, and whether to modify the composition. The Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning (Kompetanse Norge) ought to be included as a member of the group.

8.5.1 Conclusions and measures

- The Government will continue the working group for coordinated information for Norwegian students abroad and will also expand the group’s mandate so that the group also comprises representatives from the management level (i.e. the decision-making level).

9 Recognition of overseas education – regulations and challenges

The ambition for a greater proportion of Norwegian students to have a learning period abroad raises a number of different challenges for the higher education sector related to the recognition of overseas education and vocational qualifications.

9.1 Recognition of higher education and vocational qualifications taken abroad

The Norwegian system for recognising higher education and qualifications from abroad is organised according to the purpose of the recognition, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. If the purpose is recognition of higher education in connection with occupations that are not regulated, it is the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) that assesses the education (general approval). If the purpose is recognition to obtain a Norwegian degree or admission for further study in Norway, the university or university college in question assesses the individual application (so-called “specific academic recognition”). If the purpose is authorisation or recognition of a foreign professional qualification in order to be allowed to practise a regulated profession in Norway, it is the relevant recognition authority that will process the application (recognition of professional qualifications). These recognition systems are administered by different sector ministries.

Assessments in connection with recognising foreign higher education qualifications must be based on the provisions of the Universities and University Colleges Act and the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention).

9.1.1 Recognition of higher education

The provisions of sections 3-4 and 3-5 of the Universities and University Colleges Act are intended

to ensure that individuals who complete education at different Norwegian institutions and across national borders can receive recognition for the education they have taken. Recognition of education is relevant when the individual wants to study at another university or university college (section 3-5), or, for example, wants to work in an unregulated profession in Norway (section 3-4).¹

Individuals who have taken education abroad, and who wish to use this expertise in occupations that are not regulated in Norway can apply to the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) for general recognition of their education.² In connection with student mobility, it is primarily specific (academic) recognition and recognition of professional qualifications that are used, so general recognition will not be discussed in further detail in this white paper.

Students who take part of their Norwegian education abroad, or individuals who have taken a foreign higher education qualification, and who wish to continue their studies in Norway or to have a completed education assessed for recognition as academically equivalent to an education in Norway, need an assessment of the academic content of their education compared with a specific accredited Norwegian higher education (cf. section 3-5, third paragraph, of the Universities and University Colleges Act). Specific recognition thus differs from general recognition in that it provides information about the extent to which a particular qualification conferred by a foreign edu-

¹ A person with professional qualifications from another country who wishes to work in a profession regulated by law in Norway must apply to the relevant recognition authority in order to obtain recognition of their professional qualifications or authorisation. See the more detailed discussion of this later in this chapter.

² Decisions on general recognition cannot be used by higher education institutions to obtain recognition of the education (cf. the formulation in section 3-4 that this kind of recognition must be applied for by individuals). In this case, higher education institutions must apply for accreditation (cf. section 3-1). Nor is it the intention that decisions on general recognition shall be used by the recognition authorities when assessing applications for recognition of professional qualifications (authorisation).

cational institution corresponds to all or parts of a particular study programme at a particular university or university college in Norway in terms of academic content and level.³

The exemption provision in section 3-5, second paragraph, is a so-called *may* provision, meaning there is no obligation for the institution to grant an exemption. The institution may recognise the foreign higher education as part of its own studies. Recognition requires an academic assessment of whether the student has achieved a specific academic level, i.e. learning outcomes equivalent to those set for the relevant courses at the specific institution. This kind of recognition means that the student will be granted ECTS credits corresponding to this academic level. The institution is thus free to decide whether exemption should be granted for foreign education on the basis of its own academic assessment. However, for education taken in countries that have signed and ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention⁴, the principles of the Convention must also be applied. The Lisbon Recognition Convention has been signed and ratified by the member states of the Council of Europe and UNESCO's European Region; it is also possible for countries outside these areas to join the Convention.⁵

The purpose of the Lisbon Recognition Convention is to facilitate greater academic mobility

between countries and develop common solutions to practical problems with regard to recognition of higher education qualifications. The basic principle of the Convention is that the competent authorities in one country must recognise the educational qualifications issued by another Convention Party as equivalent to their own educational qualifications unless *substantial differences* can be demonstrated between the qualifications. When a country recognises a completed programme of education from another Convention Party, it must also grant the student in question access to continue studying on equal terms with the nation's own candidates. Recognition also entails that the student is entitled to use the academic title the recognised qualification confers (as applicable) in accordance with the laws and regulations applicable in the country in which the education has been recognised.⁶

The provisions of the Universities and University Colleges Act will be discussed in more detail under the review of the applicable law in chapter 31 of Official Norwegian Report NOU 2020: 3 New Act relating to universities and university colleges.⁷

9.1.2 Recognition of professional qualifications

People who wish to practise a profession regulated by law in Norway will need to have their professional qualifications recognised. Regulated professions differ from non-regulated professions in that the competent authorities have regulated specific qualification requirements for the right to use the professional title and/or practise the profession. The number of regulated professions varies from country to country, and in Norway most are within the health sector. A total of 29 categories of health personnel have a protected title, and these are listed in section 48, first paragraph, of the Norwegian Health Personnel Act. Authorisation or a licence is required to use these titles.⁸

The scheme for recognition of professional qualifications (authorisation) within the EEA is

³ In connection with recognition of entire education qualifications, it is a matter of assessing equivalence pursuant to section 3-5, third paragraph, of the Universities and University Colleges Act, and in connection with recognition of parts of a qualification from a foreign educational institution, it is a matter of assessing whether exemption can be granted pursuant to section 3-5, second paragraph, of the Universities and University Colleges Act.

⁴ https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kd/vedlegg/uh/lisboakonvensjonen/f4260_web.pdf.

⁵ Overview of states that have ratified the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region ETS. no. 165 (the Lisbon Recognition Convention):

Members of the Council of Europe:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Moldova, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Kingdom.

Non-members of the Council of Europe:

Australia, Belarus, Canada, Vatican City State, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kurdistan, New Zealand, Tajikistan.

States that have not ratified the Convention:

USA (which has only signed the Convention, meaning it is not legally binding on the USA).

⁶ The Nordic countries have cooperated in the field of education for many years. The Nordic Council of Ministers for Education and Research has an agreement concerning cultural cooperation, one purpose of which is to make it easier for students and other nationals of one Nordic country to study and obtain degrees at educational establishments in the other Nordic countries. In addition, the agreement shall ensure mutual recognition of degrees, partial qualifications and other documentary evidence of educational achievement (the Reykjavik Declaration).

⁷ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/nou-2020-3/>

different from, and must be kept separate from, the scheme for recognition of foreign higher education. Neither general recognition nor specific recognition of foreign education qualifications automatically entitles the individual to practise a profession regulated by law. Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications (the Professional Qualifications Directive) has been implemented in Norwegian law in the Professional Qualifications Act⁹ for all professions except for health personnel and animal health professionals. For these professions, the Directive is implemented in the Regulations relating to the Health Personnel Act¹⁰ and the Animal Health Personnel Act.¹¹

9.2 International work

9.2.1 UNESCO's Global Convention

The UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education was adopted on 14 November 2019. The Convention is intended to bridge the gap between UNESCO's various regional recognition conventions, including the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Norway has been a very active contributor in the development of the Convention, both financially and in terms of content. Norway was the first country globally to ratify the Convention in June 2020.

9.2.2 European and Global Qualifications Passports for Refugees

In 2017, following an idea from the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), which had tested a system of Qualifications Passports in Norway in 2016, the Council of Europe initiated a pilot project to develop a European Qualifications Passport for refugees.

⁸ The difference between «authorisation» and a «licence» is that authorisation grants full rights to practise the profession until the age of 80 years, whereas a licence grants a limited right to practise the profession, and is usually limited in time.

⁹ Act no. 69 of 16 June 2017 relating to recognition of professional qualifications.

¹⁰ Regulation no. 1130 of 8 October 2008 on authorisation, licences and specialist recognition for health care professionals with professional qualifications from other EEA States or from Switzerland.

¹¹ Regulation no. 77 of 19 January 2009 on the right to work as animal health personnel or artificial inseminator under the EEA Agreement.

The project is rooted in Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which states that countries should facilitate refugees and vulnerable migrants to have their qualifications assessed even if they cannot be documented. In addition to Norway, Greece, Italy and Belgium have also participated actively in the development and have contributed financially. The project has been very successful. Based on the good experience of the Council of Europe's project, in 2018 Norway proposed that UNESCO should investigate the possibility of developing a global qualifications passport. A pilot project was conducted in Zambia in autumn 2019, and on 13 November 2019 the first eleven Global Qualifications Passports were signed in Paris. UNESCO's pilot project was carried out with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and has proven so successful that it has now been continued as an ordinary project in UNESCO with funding from other donors as well.

9.2.3 The work on automatic mutual recognition of qualifications

In 2018, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) established a scheme for voluntary automatic recognition of qualifications from the Nordic region. The scheme applies to selected new qualifications at the bachelor's, master's and PhD levels.¹² In 2019, the scheme was expanded to include qualifications from Poland and Lithuania, and NOKUT is working on expanding the scheme to include even more countries. NOKUT's automatic recognition comprises standardised statements from NOKUT about what a foreign qualification corresponds to in the Norwegian education system, based on assessments NOKUT has made about a qualification from a country in a specific era. This process does not involve processing an application, and no individual decision is issued. It is an optional alternative to the normal procedure, which is that an individual applies for recognition of their qualifications (i.e. their application is processed individually). One advantage of automatic recognition is that an applicant will be able to receive a document showing what the applicant's qualification corresponds to in the Norwegian system with just a few clicks, as opposed to having to wait for an

¹² More information about the scheme, and the full list of qualifications currently included in the scheme can be found at: <https://www.nokut.no/utdanning-fra-utlandet/automatisk-godkjenning-utvalgte-grader/>

individual application to be processed. The statement can be downloaded, as an optional alternative to applying for general recognition from NOKUT in the ordinary manner.

European countries have been working for a long time to harmonise their education systems, with a view to making it easier for people to take their qualifications with them across national borders. In 2015, education ministers from all 48 countries participating in the Bologna Process together with the European Commission adopted a common goal of automatic recognition of comparable qualifications in the European higher education area by 2020.

On 22 May 2018¹³, the European Commission therefore published a Council Recommendation on automatic mutual recognition. The goal is that all upper secondary pupils and students will be able to have a learning period in another EU country automatically approved without having to undergo special approval procedures. According to the Council Recommendation, the member states have certain obligations they must fulfil in order for automatic approval to be possible.

The Council Recommendation is based on ongoing processes that Norway and the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) participate in through the ENIC-NARIC Network¹⁴, the Bologna Process and the work on developing the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Norway already meets most of the obligations within higher education. Norway has also established national guidelines for the recognition of foreign upper secondary qualifications for admission to higher education, and Norway already approves qualifications from EU countries that meet the criteria.

9.3 Challenges

Many students point out that one of the main obstacles to studying abroad is that they are unsure whether the education they take abroad will be recognised at home. The individual higher education institutions are responsible for the academic assessment in connection with specific aca-

demically recognition of foreign education qualifications, and they have great autonomy to grant exemption from certain courses, even if they are bound by regulations and conventions. It is important that the institutions create a flexible practice for the recognition of subjects as part of Norwegian education qualifications. There is much evidence to suggest that some institutions and academic environments adopt an unnecessarily strict interpretation when assessing qualifications from foreign educational institutions (cf. the Lisbon Recognition Convention's requirement that a foreign education qualification must be recognised as long as there are no "substantial differences" between the foreign and national education qualification).

Although this requirement initially applies only between the Convention Parties (that is, the states that have ratified the Convention), the higher education institutions ought to consider whether it might be appropriate to allow the guidelines laid down in the Convention to also apply to non-Convention Parties, such as the USA, which have not ratified the Convention.¹⁵

Some Norwegian students who have taken their entire education abroad have experienced difficulty having their professional qualifications recognised or being granted authorisation on their return to Norway after studying abroad. This may be because the student has misunderstood or has not been sufficiently informed about what the overseas education will qualify them for. In particular, there have been problems linked to health and medical education taken in countries outside the EEA, and in many cases it is necessary to take complementary education and practical training in Norway in order to meet the requirements for authorisation and thus be able to practise the profession in Norway.

On commission from the Ministry of Education and Research, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) has recently mapped the recognition bodies for regulated professions.¹⁶ NOKUT has found, among other things, that there are differences in the way the regulations are implemented and differences in practices between the individual recognition authorities. NOKUT concludes that there are no

¹³ Adopted in November 2018 by the Council of European Union <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13955-2018-INIT/en/pdf>.

¹⁴ ENIC and NARIC are networks of national offices that provide information about recognition of foreign education qualifications and the education systems in different countries. The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) is Norway's ENIC-NARIC office.

¹⁵ The USA has only signed the Convention, but has not ratified it. This means that the USA is under no obligation to comply with the Lisbon Recognition Convention, nor is it legally binding on the USA.

¹⁶ Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education – NOKUT (2019c).

grounds for combining all the recognition bodies in a single common technical solution, or for NOKUT to assess the applicants' education as the first step in the process in all the recognition systems. Instead, NOKUT recommends that recognition bodies which only assess a few applications be integrated under a common recognition authority, and that a common technical solution be developed for these bodies.

In order to increase the predictability for people considering studying abroad, NOKUT proposes in its report that systems for preliminary pre-approval be established for selected countries or institutions. In particular, NOKUT recommends that the Government should consider initiating a pilot project for preliminary pre-approval for the bodies under the Directorate of Health. NOKUT also recommends that a review be conducted of how professions are regulated and which professions are regulated.

It is important that students who take education abroad encounter as predictable a process as possible. With regard to education that leads to professions in health care, it is essential to ensure that patient safety and quality of health and care services are maintained. The education and profession in the country of education or in Norway may change during the course of a study period. If the changes are significant, it will not be possible to grant authorisation pursuant to the Health Personnel Act. The reason for this is that the authorisation system is intended to ensure that health professionals have the qualifications necessary for the relevant profession in Norway. Other measures, such as availability of information on which requirements are afforded the greatest weight in connection with recognition of professional qualifications from abroad, will lead to greater predictability for students and can be implemented without the need for extensive changes to the regulations or the system for recognition of professional qualifications (authorisation).

In this context, it is stressed that there is a difference between students who take their full education or a full degree abroad and those who study abroad as part of a Norwegian education or degree. People who take Norwegian education are automatically authorised as health professionals, even if part of their education was taken abroad, assuming the part taken overseas is approved by the Norwegian higher education institution.

A process has been initiated to look into how responsibility for parts of the process of recognition of professional qualifications (authorisation)

can be coordinated, although the respective recognition authorities will still be responsible for the final academic assessment of whether an individual applicant is qualified to be able to practise a profession regulated by law in Norway. One possibility is to centralise responsibility for assessing aspects such as the authenticity of an applicant's qualifications and their level pursuant to the Professional Qualifications Directive in a single body. This could enable good, efficient processing.

It should also be considered whether a technical solution should be developed that allows the recognition authorities to carry out automated and manual checks on reception of applications, to create searchable overviews of decisions in similar cases, etc. Processing can be streamlined through greater use of digital tools and data sharing.

9.4 Conclusions and measures

- The Government holds that although the regulations for recognition of higher education from other countries are clear and easy to apply, the regulations are not always practised in accordance with the intentions behind the regulations or the wording of the legal provisions. In connection with the work on a new Universities and University Colleges Act, the Government will therefore emphasise Norway's commitments under the Lisbon Recognition Convention in terms of recognition of foreign education qualifications, and will consider amending the relevant provision in the Universities and University Colleges Act to ensure that the principle of the Convention that foreign education shall be approved unless there are "substantial differences" is enshrined in Norwegian law. This will clarify the legislation and the rules that the institutions must follow when assessing whether higher education qualifications from another country can be approved and recognised.
- The Government stresses the importance of transparency and collaboration in the sector in respect of recognition of foreign education qualifications, and the goal that this will lead to more equal treatment of applications for recognition and an increase in competencies in this area in the higher education sector.
- The Government will ensure that better information about recognition of foreign education qualifications is provided via the websites of

the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), Altinn and the Directorate of Health. This applies to information about both recognition of foreign education and information about recognition of professional qualifications (authorisation).

- The Government encourages the higher education institutions to base their assessments of foreign education on the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, also when assessing education from countries that have not signed and ratified the Convention.
- The Government will investigate the possibility of further simplifying the system for recognition of professional qualifications for professions with few applications.
- The Government will initiate a pilot project to provide students with greater predictability in terms of information about the requirements that the Directorate of Health attaches greatest

importance to when recognising professional qualifications from abroad.

- The Government will also look into how professions are regulated, which professions are currently regulated, and which professions ought to continue to be regulated. This is also an element in the implementation of the obligations that ensue from the Professional Qualifications Directive.
- The Government will consider how Norway can best contribute to the global implementation of the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education.
- In 2021, the Government will continue its support of the Council of Europe's European Qualifications Passports for Refugees and UNESCO's Global Qualifications Passports for Refugees.

10 Economic and administrative consequences

10.1 Economic consequences

The Government wants student mobility of between one and three months to trigger performance-based funding in the funding system for universities and university colleges. This will have implications for the budget in the Ministry of Education and Research's areas of responsibility. Today, only a small proportion of the students who go abroad on a mobility stay go for a period shorter than three months. According to the Ministry of Education and Research's estimates, the performance-based funding for these students, based on the current rates for student exchange, will amount to approximately NOK 13 million. The Government will determine when the change will be introduced at a later date, in the ordinary national budgets.

This white paper calls for a major cultural change, such that international student mobility becomes an integral part of all programmes of study. This requires good digital systems, primarily to handle applications for and recognition of mobility stays abroad, but also in terms of providing information in general. In the national budget for 2020, NOK 1 million has been allocated to Unit (the Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services in Higher Education and Research) for the work to boost the digitalisation of the study administrative systems.

The Government will amend the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund's (Lånkassen) educational grant support schemes for students abroad so that they provide stronger incentives for students to go abroad for a study or training period or take full-degree education in Norway's priority partner countries in the field of education.

The changes to the student support schemes will be funded by reducing the number of foreign institutions that entitle students to an additional grant. The changes will be presented in the annual budget proposals. Students who are already taking an education that entitles them to an additional grant will retain this right even if the institution they are studying at is removed from the list.

In the national budgets for 2020 and 2021, NOK 15 million a year has been allocated to the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku) to strengthen the higher education institutions' work on increasing the proportion of students who spend a learning period abroad. The funds will be used in line with the Government's ambitions as described in this white paper, including for pilot projects to increase mobility in the educations regulated by a national curriculum.

The Government proposes that Norway participate in the EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport (Erasmus+) in the period 2021–2027, but will not make a final decision on this until the EU's long-term financial framework has been adopted.

In the event of a final decision to participate in Erasmus+ from 2021, the Government will present a proposition of consent to the Storting on participation in Erasmus+ with a view to incorporation into the EEA Agreement no later than July 2021. The Government will return to the budgetary implications in the annual national budgets (cf. also the discussion in Proposition no. 1 to the Storting (2020–2021) chapter 288, item 74, from the Ministry of Education and Research for the budget proposal for 2021).

The Government points out in the current white paper that, in the event of a final decision to participate in Erasmus+ from 2021, it will be assessed whether other measures are needed to ensure good Norwegian participation in Erasmus+. This means, among other things, that the Government will assess the need to increase the administrative funding to Diku and the Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) to deal with a larger budget for and increased activity linked to Erasmus+, whether to introduce stimulation funds to increase Norway's participation, and whether supplementary funds ought to be provided to increase the impact of Norway's participation for society in general. Furthermore, the white paper states that it will be assessed whether there is a need for project establishment support and stimulation measures to increase

training mobility. The Government will return to these proposals and how any measures will be translated into concrete terms and implemented in the annual budget proposals.

Pilot projects that will give students greater predictability in terms of information about the requirements that the Directorate of Health attaches importance to when recognising professional qualifications from abroad shall be financed within the budget frameworks of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Health and Care Services.

The other measures in the white paper do not have budgetary implications, or they will be implemented within the current budget frameworks.

10.2 Administrative consequences

The Government expects that the goals, priorities and expectations presented in this white paper will *in the long term* contribute to a cultural change in the higher education sector so that international mobility becomes an integral part of all study programmes, making it possible to achieve the Government's goal that half of all graduates from Norwegian higher education will have had a learning period abroad, where this kind of international mobility will yield good learning outcomes and is practically feasible. Further, the Government has an ambition that a system will be introduced whereby students must actively

opt out of a learning period abroad, as opposed to having to opt in. This reorganisation of the study programmes shall take place within the institutions' own budgetary frameworks, and the individual universities and university colleges will be able to implement these changes at different paces. The Government is therefore proposing that the institutions decide how and when to introduce a system of "active opt-out". The Ministry of Education and Research will follow up on the targets, priorities and expectations presented in this white paper in its management dialogue with the universities, university colleges, the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), the National Body for Quality in Education (NOKUT) and the Directorate for ICT and Joint Services in Higher Education and Research (Unit).

Changes to the educational support scheme will necessitate changes in regulations and will have administrative consequences for the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund's (Lånekassen) management of the scheme.

The Ministry of Education and Research

r e c o m m e n d s :

Recommendation from the Ministry of Education and Research of 30 October 2020 on A world of opportunities – International student mobility in higher education be submitted to the Storting.

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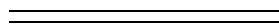
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