



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY  
OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Strategy

# North America Strategy for Higher Education Cooperation 2012–2015







# The strategy

## Introduction

International cooperation is an instrument to increase the quality in Norwegian higher education and research: Only through comparison with others can we see our own advantages and weaknesses. Through an internationally oriented academia, we educate students who are competent for work in a globalized world, and researchers who can benefit from and contribute to the global community of knowledge.

Much of the world's innovative knowledge production takes place in North America. This is the reason why knowledge collaboration with the United States and Canada has been a mainstay in the development of Norwegian higher education and research since the end of World War II. During this period, Norwegian institutions have developed into attractive partners in several fields, and the U.S. and Canada are still two of Norway's most important strategic partners in higher education and research cooperation.

To support the cooperation with the U.S. and Canada, Norway developed a Strategy for Norway's Scientific and Technological Cooperation with North America in 2005. In 2007, the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) supplemented this strategy by launching a North America Strategy for Higher Education Cooperation for the period 2008–2011.

The status assessment of the 2008–2011 strategy shows an upward trend in student mobility between Norway and North America, and the transatlantic partnerships established under the strategy have become models of best practice for institutional collaboration. The status assessment also points to the need for increased efforts regarding meeting places

for cooperation with Canada, mobility at the Master and Ph.D. levels and the recruitment of North American students to Norway.

The follow-up of this strategy will relate to the Strategy for Norway's Scientific and Technological Cooperation with North America and the Government's High North Strategy, when relevant.

## Priorities and measures 2012–2015

The main priorities of this strategy are:

- Collaboration at government level and network arenas
- Institutional partnerships and stronger correlation between higher education and research collaboration
- Mobility of students and staff

There is extensive higher education and research collaboration between Norway and North America in many fields. Some prioritized fields of research cooperation are: energy, health, ICT, polar research, climate, and natural resources.

As circumpolar nations we have common challenges and mutual interests regarding issues concerning the High North, also in the fields of research and higher education.

The aim of this higher education strategy is to support high quality cooperation in all fields, in order to develop and strengthen strong and long-term cooperation structures between Norwegian and North American higher education institutions.

### *Collaboration at government level and network arenas*

Dialogue and contact at government level is fundamental in order to stimulate increased cooperation and to reduce formal barriers which hinder cooperation initiatives. Network arenas are also vital tools for dispersion of information and coupling of partners, and also for accommodating discussions.

The Transatlantic Education Forum was established under the 2008–2011 strategy. The Canadian and American embassies participate in the Forum, together with MER, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU), the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions (UHR), the Research Council of Norway (RCN), the Association of Norwegian Students Abroad (ANSA), the National Union of Students in Norway (NSO)<sup>1</sup>, and the Fulbright Foundation. This has proved to be an important arena for discussing mutual challenges and possible measures. The Forum will be maintained and the Ministry will include the Norwegian Network for Private Higher Education Institutions (NPH) in the Forum. The Ministry will also invite additional stakeholders to the meetings when relevant. Furthermore, there is a need to establish other structures for dispersion of information between relevant Norwegian partners and stakeholders.

The yearly Transatlantic Science Week provides a meeting place for partnerships in research, innovation and higher education. Research frontiers are international, and collaborative networks are essential in finding solutions to global challenges. The Transatlantic Science Week will be used actively to promote higher education cooperation and to create synergies with the research cooperation.

The Ministry will further work to extend the dialogue with Canadian and American authorities and partners, including relevant student organizations.

The Ministry will support targeted measures towards creating meeting places between Norwegian and Canadian institutions. The Norwegian Embassy in Ottawa has initiated a forum for cooperation between Norwegian and Canadian higher education and research institutions, and the Ministry will contribute to the further development of this forum. The Ministry will also consider using other arenas to promote higher education cooperation, both in Canada and Norway.

The Ministry will seek to establish a dialogue with the business sector, to support common interests in the enhancement of the higher education cooperation with North America.

### *Institutional partnerships and stronger correlation between higher education and research collaboration*

There are many ways to approach and organize international cooperation in higher education. This strategy prioritizes the development and strengthening of institutional partnerships which create fruitful synergies between higher education and research cooperation. It is the Ministry's view that the students should benefit from the research cooperation going on between Norwegian and North American partners, and that institutions which have discovered research areas of mutual interest will have a solid foundation also for higher education cooperation. The Ministry aims at an increase in the cooperation on education modules, sandwich programs and degrees, with a priority at the Master and Ph.D. levels. In addition, the higher education institutions should seek to include the Bachelor level in their cooperation activities.

The Ministry established the Partnership

<sup>1</sup> From fall 2010

Program for higher education collaboration between Norwegian institutions and institutions in the U.S. and Canada under the 2008–2011 strategy. The program encourages collaboration between institutions by building sustainable academic networks and strengthening exchanges. There will be a new Partnership Program for the period of 2012–2015 with emphasis on synergies between higher education and research cooperation.

Project funding was introduced as a measure in 2009. The project funding is mainly seed funding for the establishment of new academic collaborations and for reinforcement of existing collaboration initiatives. Project funding will be continued in 2012–2015.

The Ministry will earmark parts of the Partnership Program and project funds to cooperation with Canada.

### *Mobility of students and staff*

It is a goal to increase the mobility of students and staff. First and foremost, the strategy will stimulate and support mobility as part of institutional partnerships, both mobility from Norway to North America, and from North America to Norway. However, the Ministry will also encourage an increase in the mobility of degree seeking students, especially on the Master and Ph.D. levels.

ANSA plays an important role with regards to information and accommodation for students who want to pursue a full degree abroad, and the organization has a special focus on studies in the U.S. and Canada.

The Fulbright Program aims to increase mutual understanding between the peoples of the U.S. and other countries, through the exchange of persons, knowledge and skills and contributes to mobility of students and researchers between Norway and the U.S. The Fulbright Foundation

received an increase in MER-funding in 2008–2010, and from 2011 the increase of NOK 1 mill. was made permanent. The Fulbright Foundation also receives funding from other Norwegian partners, and the different Fulbright scholarships support the overall goals of this strategy. As an example, the Fulbright Arctic Chairs, supported by the MFA, are highly relevant in the light of this strategy and the Government's High North Strategy.

The continuation of the Partnership Program and the project funding mentioned above will contribute to increased mobility of students and staff through institutional cooperation.

The Norwegian higher education institutions should also seek to increase the reciprocal student exchange through their institutional partnerships.

There are a number of schemes which support mobility of students and researchers from North America to Norway and from Norway to North America, such as the Fulbright Program, the Fellowship Programme for Studies in the High North, the north2north student exchange program, the Nordic Research Opportunity, the Leiv Eiriksson mobility program – which all exist in addition to the regular student financial support schemes. Better coordination of information measures will contribute to a better utilization of these opportunities.

The Ministry will also support targeted information measures about the Norwegian higher education system directed towards North American students and higher education institutions in order to increase the mobility of North American students and staff to Norway.

The Ministry will work to reduce formal barriers which hinder cooperation and mobility of students and staff.



## Targets

The success of the strategy will in part be measured by the development in the student mobility between Norway and North America<sup>2</sup>. The Ministry will also monitor the development of e.g. joint study provisions between Norwegian and North American partner institutions. It is to be noted that the aims of the strategy are not restricted to these indicators.

### *Student mobility from Norway to the U.S.*

Students	Statistics 2010–2011			Goals 2015		
	Bachelor	Master	Total	Bachelor	Master	Total
Degree students	950	275	1225	1000	600	1600
Exchange students	794	491	1285	1000	800	1800
			<b>2 510</b>			<b>3 400</b>

Source: The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund

In addition, 30 students pursued a Ph.D. degree in the U.S. with support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund in 2010–2011.

### *Student mobility from Norway to Canada*

Students	Statistics 2010–2011			Goals 2015		
	Bachelor	Master	Total	Bachelor	Master	Total
Degree students	143	11	154	200	100	300
Exchange students	101	54	155	200	150	350
			<b>309</b>			<b>650</b>

Source: The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund

In addition, nine students pursued a Ph.D. degree in Canada with support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund in 2010–2011.

### *North American students in Norway*

Statistics 2010				Goals 2015			
	Bachelor	Master	Other	Total	Bachelor	Master	Total
USA	190	140	29	359	250	200	450
Canada	79	50	19	148	100	150	250
				507			700

Source: Database for Statistics on Higher Education (DBH)

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the available statistics on mobility of students on Ph.D. level and of staff are not applicable for this purpose.



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