



Norwegian Ministry
of Education and Research

Summary

Meld. St. 25 (2016–2017) Report to the Storting (white paper)

The Humanities in Norway



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Summary

Why a white paper?

The importance of the humanities is obvious. In today's world of climate change, large-scale migration and rapid shifts in technology it is necessary to understand the importance of identity, values, religion, culture, ethics and language. Democracies require an enlightened public debate, which in turn requires a literate population with a basic understanding of history and international relations. Working life is characterised by globalisation, changing modes of production, increasing complexity and the introduction of new technologies. In our times, it is even more important than before that school pupils learn to navigate in the constant flow of increasingly complex and ambiguous information. The experience of art opens the mind to perspectives and insights not directly accessible by other means. The humanities are central to all these areas of human experience. We therefore need research and education in the humanities, in schools and in institutions of higher education, of the highest possible quality.

This white paper highlights several issues related to the involvement and contribution of the humanities in meeting societal challenges. Humanities scholars possess knowledge, skills and tools that should be used more often. Their knowledge and skills are not sufficiently included in the meeting of disciplines that is necessary in order to tackle complex challenges in working life and society in general. Too many humanities graduates experience difficulties in the labour market.

A second concern is the contribution of universities to the teaching of humanities subjects in schools. Here all parties have work to

do. With some exceptions, academics appear to have avoided getting involved in the challenges experienced by schools in modern-day society. On the other hand, they may reasonably argue that they have not been invited to do so by those who work more closely with school-related subjects, such as pedagogy and didactics.

This white paper takes as its point of departure that the humanities play a formative part in human history and culture and as a foundation for open debate in the public sphere. The humanities must be relevant – not in a narrow utilitarian sense or as mere supporting disciplines. The humanities are most relevant when they can contribute on their own terms, according to their strengths.

This is the first political document to give a full presentation of the humanities in Norway. It discusses how the potential of the humanities may be unleashed in order to meet the major challenges of our time – in business, in cultural life, in schools and in other important areas of society such as the armed forces. Policy changes and adjustments will be necessary, but so will changes at the educational and research institutions themselves as well as in their surroundings: society and working life, which are to absorb knowledge from the humanities in the form of research findings and fresh graduates. A central aim of this white paper is to contribute to greater mutual curiosity, exploration and proximity between the humanities and other subject areas and areas of society.

The bulk of humanities research and education in Norway is conducted at higher education institutions (HEIs). Norway's universities and university colleges enjoy considerable academic, strategic and economic freedom, and measures taken at the national level can succeed only if they are followed up by the institutions and their governing bodies. The white paper is intended to serve as a starting point for further dialogue with the HEIs on how to make their research and study programmes as relevant as possible, how to improve their quality and how to realise the full potential of the humanities. It presents clear expectations to the HEIs and the Research Council of Norway, and proposes measures to enable the humanities to play an even greater role in meeting the major challenges of today. Among the issues discussed are coordinating course-portfolios among HEIs,

dealing with dropout rates, nurturing exceptionally gifted and motivated students, patterns in publishing, encouraging the study of foreign languages, making learning outcomes relevant to the needs of the labour market, and strengthening the links between academia and schools.

Definitions

In this white paper the term ‘humanities’ is used to designate a range of subjects traditionally associated with university faculties of the humanities, and partly faculties of theology. Broadly, it corresponds to the category ‘humanities and arts subjects’ in the Norwegian Standard Classification of Education, but excluding the fine arts.¹ The subjects are defined partly by the object of study, e.g. French, and partly by the methods applied, e.g. structuralist analysis. Some subjects, such as history and media studies, may share common features with the social sciences, whereas some aspects of others, such as linguistics, philosophy and archaeology, may be closer to the natural sciences or medicine. The humanities are not studied at university level only: they are central to school education and therefore to teacher training, and also influence other educational programmes and fields, such as the fine arts.

The humanities in Norway constitute a vital and multifaceted field of disciplines and actors. Besides the universities and university colleges, humanities research and education take place in archives, libraries, museums, art institutions and other institutions dedicated to preserving our cultural heritage. These institutions serve as guardians of the nation’s memory, and provide humanities scholars and researchers with a unique collection of source materials. In addition, they carry out significant research themselves. Research themes and methods associated with the humanities are also found at public research institutes such as the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), the Norwe-

¹ The Norwegian Standard Classification of Education (NUS) is used by Statistics Norway in its national and international reporting of educational data.

gian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU), Telemark Research Institute, Fafo, the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies (IFS) and the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI).

What the humanities give us

Language is a defining trait of being human. It permeates our consciousness and is inextricably linked to our ability to formulate abstract concepts. The Norwegian language forms part of the infrastructure of society, and serves as a language of scientific publication. The Sami language plays a similar role in the Sami community. Foreign language skills are increasingly important in a globalised world. Languages are a central part of the humanities.

Ethnic and cultural differences, religion, differing ethical and aesthetic preferences, values and identity influence discussions of social questions. No individual discipline is capable of tackling the challenges related to major issues like climate and the environment on its own. The humanities are especially well equipped to analyse the cultural and social aspects of such challenges.

Encounters between different cultures are becoming increasingly frequent and may give rise to rivalries between different religious, cultural and moral value systems. Knowledge of our own history and culture as well as that of others can open new perspectives, give rise to new concepts and heighten our capacity for creative thinking and critical analysis, including self-criticism. These are important foundations for such basic democratic values as openness, empathy and a critical perspective. For example, the police need multicultural skills in order to ensure that different ethnic groups are met with the same degree of respect and on equal terms.

What keeps societies together? Humanities scholars analyse how individuals and groups, in Europe and the rest of the world, have argued in favour of certain social models. They show how different models and arguments are involved, correlating or differing in our globalised world. What is identity? In what ways will demographic changes influence culture and ethics? The humanities explore the foundations of myths, ethics, narratives and ideologies.

The humanities play a key role as the guardian of the fundamental values and essential knowledge on which societies and civilisations are built: historical timelines, religion, language, art, culture, philosophy and norms provide useful knowledge in themselves and also help to situate phenomena and events in a larger context. Humanities research describes the character of different societies and explores questions fundamental to their development, questions about the value of life and what it means to be human. A society which concerns itself solely with the present moment and solving immediate problems will not be sustainable. Knowing history and being able to analyse it critically are essential to further development.

The challenges of our time

Climate change, demography and new technologies are changing the conditions of human life all over the world. Through the movement of goods, services, information and people, different parts of the world become more tightly interwoven than ever before. Society faces security challenges, such as transborder crime, terrorism, extreme weather events and digital attacks. According to UN projections, the global population will have reached nine billion by 2050. More people must be rescued from poverty, and an ever-larger elderly population will require health services and care. Living within the limits of our planet's resources will require fundamental changes to today's systems of production and consumption in order to make them sustainable. The pace of change is fast and its effects are not always predictable.

Recognising these challenges and taking into account Norway's comparative advantages, the government has identified six areas of priority in its *Long-term plan for research and higher education 2015–2024* (Meld. St. 7 (2014–2015)). These defined priority areas will form the framework for our efforts to strengthen Norwegian research and higher education in the period covered by the plan. Large and complex challenges require concerted efforts by strong research groups and educational institutions. A key measure here has been to encourage and support mergers between several universities and uni-

versity colleges to enable them to pool resources, as described in the white paper to the Storting on structural reform in higher education (Meld. St. 18 (2014–2015) *Konsentrasjon for kvalitet: Strukturreform i universitets- og høyskolesektoren*). In another recent white paper, the government presents various measures for strengthening the quality of teaching in Norwegian higher education (Meld. St. 16 (2016–2017) *Kultur for kvalitet i høyere utdanning*).

The humanities have an important role to play in solving many of the problems mentioned here. Societal challenges related to climate and environmental change, migration, international terrorism – properly understanding them calls for analysis of the public discourse in which they are described, as that forms the basis upon which actions are taken, political or otherwise. Humanities subjects like history and media studies have a key critical role to play in modern society. The emergence of ‘fake news’, especially on the Internet, with hundreds of websites featuring propaganda masked as objective news reporting, makes it even more urgent. When people meet to make important decisions, political or otherwise, they depend, directly or indirectly, on humanities research. Much of what they discuss will involve matters that have been studied by humanities scholars and researchers over the centuries – such as right and wrong, justice, (religious) values, historical developments or demography.

In the consultation process preceding this white paper, several challenges calling for the kind of knowledge and competences provided by the humanities emerged. Most of them may be grouped under the following headings:

- integration, migration and conflict
- major technological shifts
- climate, the environment and sustainability

These challenges tie in with four of the priority areas identified in the long-term plan for research and higher education: public sector renewal; enabling technologies; seas and oceans; and climate, environment and clean energy. They represent some of the most pressing societal challenges of our time and key policy areas for the government. However, the humanities could engage more with societal chal-

allenges in other areas as well. Norway's long-term plan for research and higher education will be revised every four years, and the government will present an updated version in 2018. One aim of the present white paper is to prepare a more visible role for the humanities within the priority areas in the updated version of the long-term plan. The societal challenges are discussed in greater depth in the white paper on *Long-term perspectives of the Norwegian economy 2017* (Meld. St. 29 (2016–2017)).

Ever since the Second World War, disciplines like mathematics, the natural sciences, technology and engineering have been subject to explicit political expectations as to their contribution to the development of society, and the state has invested heavily in laboratories and equipment. There has also been considerable political interest in the social sciences. After the war, Norwegian economists, headed by later Nobel laureates Ragnar Frisch and Trygve Haavelmo, provided an entirely new set of concepts, models and analytical tools for the politicians working to rebuild the country and develop the Norwegian welfare state. However, no similar expectations or requirements have been formulated with regard to the humanities, in contrast to their nation-building role in the nineteenth century.

In recent years, various books and reports about the humanities have been published, internationally and in Norway.² In Norway they include the report of the Committee on Liberal Education ('*Dannelsesutvalget*') and *Why Do We Need the Humanities?* (*Hva skal vi med humaniora?*), a report financed by the private foundation 'Fritt ord'. The ensuing debate has identified some specific obstacles that seem to keep humanities scholars and researchers from engaging with societal challenges – including challenges in working life stem-

² Some examples: Martha Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Princeton University Press, 2010; *The Heart of the Matter: The Humanities And Social Sciences for a Vibrant, Competitive and Secure Nation*, a report by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2013; Helen Small, *The Value of the Humanities*, Oxford University Press, 2013; Poul Holm, Arne Jarrick and Dominic Scott, *Humanities World Report*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; David Budtz Pedersen, Frederik Stjernfelt and Simon Køppe, eds, *Kampen om disciplinerne: Viden og videnskabelighed i humanistisk forskning*, Reitzels (Copenhagen), 2015.

ming from globalisation, increasing complexity, changing modes of production and the introduction of new technologies.

Previous research policy documents have not been sufficiently explicit in formulating expectations to the humanities, and have not made adequate allowance for their special characteristics. In some instances, a description of the role of the humanities which they themselves find recognizable has been missing altogether. This criticism has also been levelled at the long-term plan for Norwegian research and higher education. At the same time, the financing instruments of the Research Council of Norway (RCN) have become more standardised, often taking their starting point in working modes in science and technology, and therefore perhaps not sufficiently flexible to accommodate and stimulate participation by humanities scholars and researchers. It must be questioned whether the major research programmes of the RCN are sufficiently open to contributions from the humanities, and whether its financing instruments take sufficient account of the fact that much ground-breaking humanities research is still published by individual researchers, often in the form of monographs.

As a result, too few humanities scholars and researchers have engaged with the serious challenges facing society today, and their knowledge and skills have not been sufficiently brought to bear on these challenges. This also means that budgetary allocations for research and higher education have not yielded as high returns as they might with regard to understanding and solving urgent societal problems. This is probably also one reason why humanities graduates experience more difficulty than other comparable groups in finding relevant employment. Unless those who teach and carry out research in the humanities can serve as examples by demonstrating that they have something to contribute, private and public employers alike may have difficulty in appreciating the skills of humanities graduates. Just as importantly, the students themselves must be systematically informed about the relevance of their special expertise to working life and be able to describe it convincingly.

It may be said that politicians and humanities scholars alike have contributed to a polarised situation and a weakening of the links

between the humanities and important areas of society. This white paper aims to pave the way for reversing this development and re-strengthening these links.

The humanities in the school system

Primary and secondary education are an important arena for the humanities, where they form the basis for liberal education, for the teaching of subjects such as history, literature, languages and ethics, and for developing basic skills like reading and writing. High quality in the teaching of humanities subjects is essential to the overall quality of the Norwegian education system.

Among the most important things society can do is to create the conditions for personal development through education, so that children may become active citizens, and every child may get the same opportunities in life irrespective of family background. The humanities provide a context for understanding how we became who we are, and the challenges we face. The humanities faculties at universities and university colleges should take an interest in school education and promote the teaching profession as an attractive career path for their students.

The arrival of immigrants and refugees serves as a constant reminder of the importance of education. The cost of primary education per child in Norway has been estimated at NOK 1.1 million. However, a joint report prepared by the research institutes Fafo and Samfunnsøkonomisk Analyse A/S has calculated that failure to ensure that arriving refugee or asylum-seeker children successfully finish school costs nearly four times as much.

The stakes are high. In recent years, the poorest ten per cent of the Norwegian population have included increasing numbers of immigrant and refugee families. Failure to give their children a proper education may lead to greater inequality, a new permanent underclass and increasing social fragmentation. Schools and kindergartens are meeting places for children from different cultures, with different languages, history and religion, and thus serve as important arenas for integration.

During the process of preparing this white paper, the Ministry of Education and Research has received reports of tensions between the humanities departments and the teacher education programmes in universities and university colleges. On the one hand, it is alleged that academics from the humanities departments are kept at a distance by pedagogues who act as ‘owners’ of teacher education; on the other, that academics rooted in their own disciplines refuse to take an interest in actual classroom teaching. Similar mechanisms seem to be involved in other processes that determine the content and quality of school teaching, such as the development of national subject curricula and textbooks. The government aims to stimulate greater mutual curiosity, recognition and cooperation between humanities departments, various kinds of teacher education programmes, and schools.

Summary of the white paper

The guiding principles of the Norwegian government’s research and higher education policies presented in the 2014 long-term plan form the basis for the present white paper. The plan covers general priorities designed to improve quality, as well as thematic priorities related to the major societal challenges of today. This white paper takes a similar approach. Chapters 2 to 6 discuss the general conditions for improving the quality of research and education in the humanities in Norway, whereas the importance of the humanities in key thematic areas is discussed in chapter 7–9. Chapter 10 is concerned with financial and administrative consequences of the proposals made.

In the white paper, the government presents two main approaches to further improving the quality of research and higher education in the humanities.

Firstly, clearer expectations must be formulated with regard to relevance: research in the humanities, in addition to being of high quality, must be relevant to society, and the corresponding higher education programmes must provide graduates with qualifications that are relevant in working life. The universities and university colleges have – and require – academic freedom. Coupled with this freedom, however, is the responsibility to recognize the needs of society and

respond to them, in this case by identifying areas where knowledge and competence from the humanities should be applied to urgent problems, as well as in teacher education and schools. The political responsibility for universities and university colleges carried by the Minister of Education and Research means that state governance of Norway's HEIs must balance the need for autonomy and academic freedom against society's need for relevant knowledge and skills.

Secondly, research programmes, including those of the Research Council of Norway, must make sufficient allowance for the special nature of the humanities, also in patterns of publication. Thematic and challenge-driven programmes must be so designed as to be genuinely open to humanities projects, historical perspectives and qualitative methods. The humanities must be visible in the programme plan as potential grant recipients, not merely as supporting disciplines. In large-scale research and innovation programmes currently dominated by other fields, it is important to have evaluation panels that are broadly composed, with expertise in assessing humanities projects and, where relevant, multidisciplinary projects with a strong humanities component. Programmes designed to stimulate high-quality research must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the working methods typical of the humanities.

Below is a summary of the government's expectations to the main actors in the field with regard to measures for further improving the quality of the humanities in Norway, as well as the measures which the government itself will take to achieve this goal.

Chapter 2: Infrastructure

The chapter gives an overview of input factors for research and education in the humanities in Norway.

Chapter 3: The humanities in universities, university colleges and research institutes

Most research and education in the humanities in Norway is conducted at universities and university colleges. The chapter focuses on

quality and results. Study programmes in the humanities appear to suffer from high dropout rates, but better statistics are needed. The average age of PhD candidates is too high; in addition, dropout needs to be reduced at this level as well. Exceptionally motivated students should be given the opportunity to realise their full potential. Subject areas with few students that are under threat of being closed down should be maintained through division of labour at the national or Nordic level, or through mechanisms for special financing. The institutions' efforts to achieve a higher success rate with the European Research Council must continue. Support mechanisms intended to promote high-quality research must be sufficiently flexible to include working modes typical of the humanities.

As opposed to the social, natural and technological sciences, where cooperation between research institutes and businesses ensures that research-based knowledge is transferred to the surrounding world, such institutes play a minor part in research in the humanities. This may indicate weak demand, which may again result from lack of relevance. On the other hand, it may reflect a view common in parts of society and business that the humanities are not to be reckoned with. In connection with the current evaluation of the research institutes and the meta-evaluation planned at the end, a broad assessment should be made of the role of research institutes in the research and innovation system, including an examination of the humanities as a field for the research institutes.

The government therefore expects:

- that the universities and university colleges continue their efforts to improve the quality of, and reduce dropout from, humanities study programmes, especially at the bachelor and PhD levels
- that HEIs focus on identifying and fostering talent
- that HEIs offer predictable career paths and support to candidates in their choice of future careers
- that universities and university colleges consider ways of making humanities research more relevant in the commercial market

The government therefore intends:

- to amend the act relating to universities and university colleges to allow HEIs to establish their own specific entrance requirements
- to stimulate the development of measures designed to give especially talented and motivated students maximum opportunities, including talent programmes and programmes with a stronger research profile alongside ordinary programmes
- to cooperate with universities and university colleges in determining the actual dropout rate in humanities programmes at the bachelor level, and to what extent the statistics are weakened by registration problems
- to establish a rectors' forum in connection with the introduction of development agreements for universities and university colleges
- to invite representatives of universities and university colleges to a meeting in autumn 2017, to discuss how to follow up the present white paper; the agenda will include the continuation of small academic subjects that may be threatened, and the relationship between the academic humanities and the schools
- to examine possible financing mechanisms for study programmes and subject areas which may otherwise be discontinued
- to follow up the question of coordination and division of labour at the Nordic level during the Norwegian presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2017
- to follow up the evaluation of humanities research in Norway currently being conducted by the Research Council of Norway in consultation with institutions of higher education and research institutions
- to request the Research Council of Norway to work together more closely with relevant humanities bodies, with the objective of designing national measures to enhance research quality linked with the quality improvement measures of the institutions themselves
- to increase the sum of money awarded to the winner of the Holberg Prize to the same level as that of the Abel Prize for mathematics

- to undertake a broad assessment of the role of research institutes in the Norwegian research and innovation system once the current evaluation is completed, in order to determine whether these institutes are suited to future needs, with special emphasis on the role and place of humanities research in the institute sector.

Chapter 4: The humanities in archives, libraries, museums, cultural heritage institutions and art institutions

Archives, libraries and museums as well as cultural heritage institutions contain unique source material for humanities research. A sufficient supply of humanities graduates is a prerequisite for cultural heritage and art institutions to fulfil their mission. Closer cooperation between these institutions and universities/university colleges should be encouraged. The volume of research conducted in archives, libraries and museums has been increasing, in turn leading to higher quality. Approved channels for peer-reviewed publications are now in place. Open access to research results and information about other activities of these institutions is desirable.

The government therefore expects:

- that archives, libraries, museums and cultural heritage and art institutions continue their positive efforts to enhance quality.

The government therefore intends:

- to explore measures for supporting greater research cooperation between universities/ university colleges and researchers based at archives, libraries and museums, and assess the need for financing mechanisms suited to the characteristics and capacity of the latter as research institutions, as part of a general review of relevant research policy measures
- to take the steps necessary to enable registration of publications and other relevant research activities of archives, libraries and museums in the research information system CRISTin

Chapter 5: Publishing patterns in the humanities

In the period 2011–2015, 56 per cent of publications in the humanities in Norway were articles, 40 per cent were chapters in books (anthologies) and four per cent were monographs. Slightly more than half (56 per cent) of the publications were in English and 37 per cent in Norwegian. German was the third most important language of publication, followed by French, Danish and Spanish.

Of a total of NOK 34.5 billion allocated to universities and university colleges from the state budget in 2017, NOK 550 million, or approximately 1.6 per cent, are distributed on the basis of publication data reported by the institutions to the Norwegian Scientific Index (*Norsk vitenskapsindeks*) in 2015. It is important to ensure correct registration in the Scientific Index of humanities publications which provide original knowledge and present results that may form the basis for further research, so that they will count in the financing system. This applies equally to publications aimed at the general public and those intended for international audiences, to works of local history and biographies in Norwegian as well as articles in English. In a communication to Norway's HEI in March 2016, the National Publishing Committee noted that too often publications seem to be registered in the Scientific Index on the basis of external criteria such as title, subtitle, preface, cover notes etc. In some instances, the definition of what constitutes scientific content and form has been interpreted too leniently, but the opposite may also be the case. Such occurrences may also indicate insufficient communication between research leaders and administrative staff responsible for reporting research results to the Scientific Index.

The government's aim is that the results of Norwegian research should be openly accessible; further, that Norway should take the lead, albeit cautiously, in this area. One concern is that the requirement for open access should not negatively affect the volume of publishing in Norwegian in a transitional phase where the languages of small countries are in a vulnerable position. In the longer term, costs related to open access publishing should become an integral part of research budgets on a par with other necessary costs.

The government therefore expects:

- that institutional leaders take responsibility for ensuring that books reported for registration in the Norwegian Scientific Index are not reported on the basis of external criteria such as title, foreword, cover notes etc., but on the basis of peer review as to whether they provide original knowledge and present results which are reproducible and may form the basis for further research
- that institutions take a well-founded approach to the costs of publication services. CERES (previously CRISTin) should be given a clear mandate to negotiate with publishers in consultation with the institutions. Those responsible for scientific journals should carefully consider their needs for support in the form of quality assurance and publishing services, and choose publishers or publishing platforms which offer high quality at a good price

The government therefore intends:

- to take measures to ensure that the general public has open access to high-quality Norwegian journals in the humanities and social sciences, by supporting the establishment of a national consortium for purchasing such journals on a trial basis for the period 2017–2020. The arrangement should then be evaluated before a decision is taken on how to proceed further.

Chapter 6: Language

The government wishes to improve the language skills of the population, in Norwegian as well as English and other foreign languages. The position of the Norwegian language as a medium for non-fiction prose texts requires special attention, in light of possible domain loss to English. A sufficient level of Sami language skills is essential to the development of Sami society. Recent years have seen an upsurge of interest in foreign languages in schools, although with regional variations. On the other hand, few students are applying to study previously popular languages such as French and German at universities

and university colleges, with the exception of one-year courses. Over time, this may aggravate the problem of recruiting qualified foreign-language teachers, especially in North Norway. It is important to involve employers in promoting foreign languages at all levels of the educational system, where they may help influence student choice by testifying to the relevance of language skills in working life. Skills in languages such as Japanese and Chinese may become more important in future.

The government therefore expects:

- that the universities and university colleges intensify their efforts to recruit more students to programmes in languages such as French and German
- that HEIs cooperate closely with businesses and other employers in promoting foreign language studies and emphasising their relevance

The government therefore intends:

- to continue the extended international exchange scheme for upper secondary school classes
- to expand the existing arrangement with specially adapted programmes in engineering and business administration for Norwegian students in France and Germany
- to include French, German and Spanish as subjects in the current programme of upgrading teacher qualifications (*Kompetanse for kvalitet*)
- to consider possible measures for ensuring a sufficient supply of foreign language teachers as part of the strategy to attract more teachers to North Norway
- to consider possible measures for maintaining foreign language teaching at HEIs in North Norway
- to use the development agreements to be concluded with universities and university colleges as a mechanism for ensuring continued

teaching of foreign languages with few students through cooperation and division of labour at the national or Nordic level

- to request the Association of Norwegian Higher Education Institutions to present a unified proposal for expanding the bachelor's degree study to four years in especially difficult languages, with languages listed in order of priority and with explanations
- to assist universities and university colleges in measures designed to promote foreign language programmes to prospective students, emphasising career prospects
- to continue the Programme for Sami Studies financed through the Research Council of Norway
- to continue the programme for supporting the publication of teaching materials in Norwegian

Chapter 7: The humanities and major challenges today

Many of the major challenges of today, such as the refugee crisis or climate and environmental change, have their roots in human activity. A central concern for the humanities is to understand, analyse and interpret human culture, past, present and future: the tracks we leave, how we communicate and interact, the ways in which we think and create, and the consequences of our actions or failure to act. Humanities departments and research groups deal with matters of current importance; their involvement is essential to a better understanding of, and better approaches to, the challenges facing modern society.

The government therefore expects:

- that the Research Council of Norway involves scholars and researchers from the humanities in the further development of relevant financing mechanisms
- that humanities scholars and researchers are included in idea laboratories, working groups and programme boards that develop financing mechanisms in the Research Council of Norway

- that humanities scholars and researchers are actively involved in contributions to the programme development in the EU framework programmes

The government therefore intends:

- to make explicit the role of the humanities as a provider of knowledge within the priority areas of the long-term plan for research and higher education, at the upcoming revision
- to request universities and university colleges as well as the Research Council of Norway to give greater priority to challenge-driven research and education in the humanities, with an emphasis on integration, migration and conflict; major technological shifts; and climate, the environment and sustainability
- to request the Research Council of Norway to intensify its efforts to involve humanities scholars and researchers in challenge-driven and strategic research
- to request the Research Council of Norway to formulate calls within its broad programmes in a way which can allow humanities scholars and researchers to participate according to their strengths
- to work to secure a larger place for the humanities in the ninth EU framework programme for research and innovation, to replace Horizon 2020 in 2021
- to continue to offer courses in teaching Norwegian as a second language where there is a demand
- to explore measures for ensuring that qualified interpreters are available in all parts of the country

Chapter 8: The humanities and the world of work

The institutions offering study programmes in the humanities carry the main responsibility for exploring and demonstrating their relevance to working life. This is emphasised by the fact that relevance of the programmes to working life is defined as one aspect which the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education evaluates in its reviews of the quality assurance systems of the institutions. Graduates

must be made aware of the relevance of the expertise acquired through their studies, through updated information about career prospects.

Most humanities graduates are employed in the public sector: the share of graduates working in the private sector has not increased significantly since the 1990s. In a business environment characterised by globalisation, changing modes of production and increasing complexity, this could indicate that the knowledge and skills provided by the humanities are not exploited to their full potential. It may be desirable for the authorities to contribute to increasing the capacity of businesses to absorb candidates with skills in areas such as languages, culture and ethics.

The government therefore expects:

- that the universities and university colleges systematically assess the extent to which their portfolio of study programmes corresponds to needs in working life with a view to graduates' career prospects
- that the universities and university colleges provide applicants with objective, well-founded information about career prospects for graduates from various programmes
- that the universities and university colleges encourage reflection on the relevance of skills and expertise acquired through humanities studies as an integral part of such programmes
- that the universities and university colleges to a greater extent offer humanities students work placements and the opportunity to carry out assignments in cooperation with businesses and public sector employers
- that civilian and military HEIs increase their cooperation in research and education in the humanities
- that the universities and university colleges offer career guidance to all students as part of their study programmes

The government therefore intends:

- to strengthen the empirical basis for quality enhancement measures through evaluations that include relevance to working life as a criterion
- to establish an Internet portal for higher education quality, with indicators at study programme level combining data from various sources, including indicators for working-life relevance
- to initiate research on the use of and future need for the knowledge and skills provided by the humanities in working life in Norway outside higher education and research
- to consider prolonging the system of Councils for Cooperation with Working Life on the basis of the upcoming evaluation, with special regard to the need for closer linkages between the humanities and working life
- to explore measures to enhance the relevance of humanities studies in connection with the development of a national arena for competitive funding based on educational quality
- to request the Research Council of Norway to explore, in cooperation with Innovation Norway, measures designed to increase the employment opportunities for humanities graduates in business and industry.

Chapter 9: The humanities in the school system

Mutual bonds between the humanities in academia and schools should form the basis for enhancing quality on both sides. The responsibility for finding suitable modes of cooperation rests with the parties themselves. It is natural that faculty members of humanities departments, who have on several occasions expressed the wish for closer contact with schools, should take the initiative. The government expects such initiatives to be well received by colleagues who work more directly with school education, for instance in the teacher training programmes. In this way the institutions themselves can take the responsibility for establishing arenas for interdisciplinary cooperation directed at improving the quality of education in schools. One

example is the integrated programmes for upper secondary school teachers, which in many ways has proved successful, not least by training many good teachers specialising in the humanities. Mention can also be made of the university school projects at the universities of Oslo, Tromsø and Trondheim, and the various arrangements for adjunct positions between universities/ university colleges on the one hand and schools on the other. Further, libraries and museums are important arenas for providing schoolchildren with humanities-related knowledge.

The government therefore expects:

- that the heads of universities and university colleges take steps to ensure that academic humanities departments become more actively involved in the future development of Norwegian school education, including curriculum design and teaching materials
- that the heads of universities and university colleges take steps to ensure that teacher education programmes are managed and organised so as to allow relevant disciplinary departments to be involved
- that humanities departments in universities and university colleges give priority to participating in teacher education, curriculum design processes and the development of teaching materials.

The government therefore intends:

- to explore measures for institutionalising the links between humanities subjects in Norway's institutions of higher education and schools, in light of the ongoing reorganisation of national centres for school education in various subjects
- to put the relationship between academic humanities and schools on the agenda of the meeting with universities and university colleges planned for autumn 2017
- to ensure that the upcoming revision of school curricula, including humanities subjects, is supervised by specialists in the subjects in question as well as in didactics

- to support the development of a better empirical basis for assessing the quality of and the processes of developing teaching materials and resources for Norwegian schools
- to consider initiating a pilot project on quality criteria in humanities subjects, based on experience from the pilot project in mathematics
- to explore further measures designed to enhance the quality of teaching materials in humanities subjects in Norway.

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Le proporzioni del corpo umano secondo Vitruvio, ca. 1490

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