

## **Mandate for Public Commission to inquire into online higher education courses**

Recently, there has been a rapid growth in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and similar educational offers. MOOCs are free courses supplied through the Internet via streaming videos from higher educational establishments and from companies that cooperate with such institutions. Large, renowned institutions such as Harvard, Stanford and MIT have fronted the development, and an increasing number of institutions across the globe are now offering MOOCs. In principle, anyone may now attend courses taught by the world's leading academics. The only requirement is an Internet access. Millions of people across the world are taking advantage of this opportunity.

The Norwegian Government has appointed a Commission to inquire into the possibilities and challenges that accompany the development of MOOCs and similar offers. The Commission shall map out the development, compare the information gathered, as well as provide Norwegian authorities and educational institutions with information on how they shall relate to this development while also taking advantage of the opportunities provided by modern technology. Due to rapid developments in this field, the Commission is preparing for a two-step process:

1. The Commission will present its first report by the end of 2013. The report shall contain an overview of the development, along with some principal recommendations based on the following problems:
  - What are the extents, market participants and developments of MOOCs – both nationally and internationally?
  - What are the driving forces behind the developments and which market participants and offers are likely to succeed?
  - Which professional support networks are being established in connection with these educational offers?
  - Which impact may this development have for Norway from a broad societal perspective?
2. In the summer of 2014, The Commission will present a more detailed report, including proposals on how Norway should respond to these developments.

Both in step 1 and step 2, the Commission is required to specifically consider which possibilities and challenges the development of MOOCs and similar offers may create in the following areas:

- Higher education, for example
  - Educational grants and loans
  - Financing of study programmes
  - Accreditation and quality assurance
  - Quality in higher education and research based education
  - Strategic use of MOOCs
  - Cooperation, division of labour and concentration (CDLC)
  - Image-building
  - International cooperation
  - Universal design
  
- Lifelong learning/continuing and further education, for example
  - Skills upgrading in working life, including small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs)
  - Regional collaboration between business and industry, working life and educational institutions, including development of tailored programs for continuing and further education in cooperation with participants in working life.

The Commission shall consider and quantify administrative and economic consequences of the action proposed. The Commission shall consider at least one proposal that may be accomplished without expanding the use of resources within the higher education sector.

## **The Commission members:**

Berit Kjeldstad, Commission chairman, professor, Trondheim

Mathis Bongo, assistant professor, Kautokeino

June Breivik, development manager, Oslo

Endre Olsvik Elvestad, student, Lillehammer

Ola Erstad, professor, Oslo

Eva Gjerdrum, manager, Tromsø

Trond Ingebretsen, manager, Oslo

Arne Krokan, professor, Trondheim

Bergljot Landstad, manager, Molde

Ingrid Melve, technical manager, Trondheim

Harald Alvestrand, software engineer, Trondheim and Stockholm