

# Quality Assurance in Higher Education - the Norwegian Way

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# The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Norway

- **42 state-owned institutions (6 full-scale universities, 5 specialized universities, 25 university colleges, 2 Academies of Fine Art and 4 military colleges). 70% of the students attend state-owned universities. No student fees are allowed.**
- **20 private colleges with financial support from the state (1 specialized university, 1 university college, 18 not accredited as institutions. 30% of the students attend private institutions for higher education. Student fee is required.**



# The Quality Reform of Higher Education

- Change in governance at the institutional level
- Increased institutional autonomy
- New funding formula for the institutions
- NOKUT – The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
- New degree structure
- New forms of student guidance, evaluation and assessment
- New financial support to students
- Internationalisation

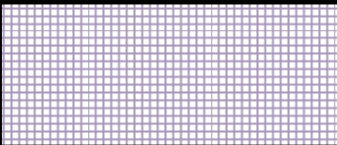
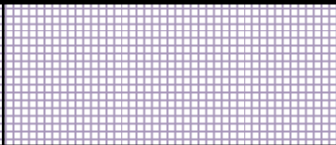
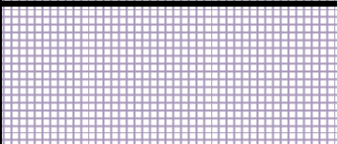
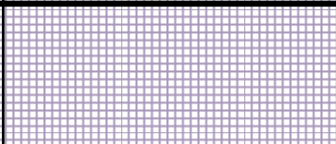
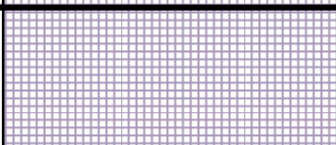


# Governance at the Institutional Level

- The Board of each state-owned HEI will consist of eleven members: four academic representatives, one representative from the technical and administrative staff, two student representatives, four external members appointed by the Ministry
- Student representatives should have at least 20% of the seats, two seats at the minimum, in all executive bodies of the institution
- For a private institution the Board shall be composed by at least five members and have representatives from the students and staff. If the Board has more than ten members, the groups representing students and staff shall have at least two members.



# Institutional Autonomy

	<b>Universities</b>	<b>Specialised universities</b>	<b>Accredited university colleges</b>	<b>Non-accredited</b>
<b>PhD.</b>				
<b>Master</b>				
<b>Bachelor</b>				



**Power to establish any study programme (BA, MA, PhD)**



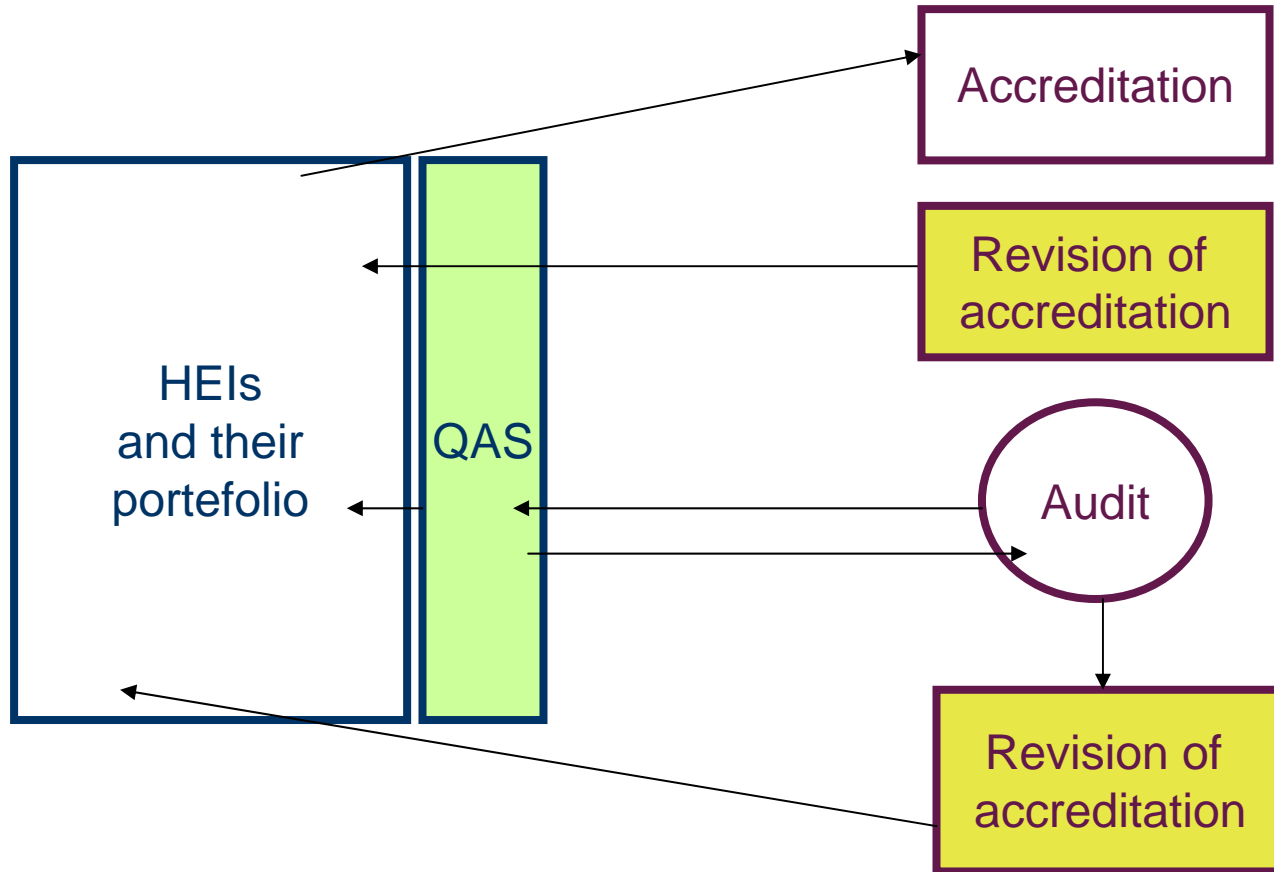
**Power is limited. The institution can not offer study programmes in the field without accreditation and a final decision by The Ministry of Education.**

# NOKUT - Mandate

- Evaluation of institutional quality assurance systems (institutional audits)
- Initial accreditation of higher education institutions
- Initial accreditation of course provisions (HE)
- Revisions of accreditations
- Evaluations for enhancement purposes
- Approval of shorter, vocational education (tertiary, but not HE)
- Recognition of foreign education



# The Norwegian Model of Quality Assurance



# Tumble-stones

- Division of labour and responsibility between NOKUT and the Ministry: NOKUT conducts what should be reliable, independent academic assessments. The Ministry is the owner and political instans.
- **The Ministry may not instruct NOKUT in excess of what is authorized by statute or laid down by the Ministry in regulations, and may not revise accreditations judgements by turning them from No to Yes.**
- HEIs have been heard when designing models for quality assurance, standards and criteria
- **All evaluations conducted by NOKUT are public and NOKUT shall make efforts to ensure that they are made known to the public.**





## When quality fails

- If NOKUT finds that an institution no longer fulfils the conditions for accreditation, the institution shall be allowed a limited time implement necessary measures.
- NOKUTs decision to withdraw accreditation of a study programme shall be sent to the institution concerned with a copy to the Ministry. The institution shall withdraw the study programme immediately.



# Appeals

- NOKUTs decisions - other than the judgements done by the external panels - can be appealed to an appeals board appointed by the Ministry.



# Programme accreditation; standards and criteria

*Universities and university colleges shall promote the purpose of the Act by providing higher education on the basis of the foremost within research, academic and artistic development work and empirical knowledge*

- Curriculum
- Staff
- Internationalisation
- Infrastructure
- Quality assurance



# Criteria

- Fairly detailed, but gives the experts room for qualitative judgements
- All criteria have to be met at a certain minimum level



# The Quality Reform

There were two main reasons for the Reform:

- to achieve improved quality in higher education and research
- The Bologna Process and Norway's obligations in this respect

Years of cooperation between the parties:  
HEIs, NOKUT and the Ministry

show that we are moving in the right direction

