

Proposal of a new law on universities and university colleges (NOU 2020: 3)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 NORWAY

Timeline

2020 Legislative process

2021 Legislative process

2022 Legislative process

2023 Completed

ID number 29089

Background

All universities and university colleges are regulated by the act relating to universities and university colleges, adopted in 2005. This was the first time there was a common regulation for both private and public institutions. This resulted in more equal regulation of private and State institutions. The act includes prior learning assessment and admission requirements, affecting students with a vocational background.

However, a complete review of all the provisions that had been in previous legislation was not undertaken. Several statutory provisions, therefore, mainly continued, and the result is that many statutory provisions have remained largely unchanged for decades. Since 2005, the University and College Act has been revised several times, but changes have only been made to limited parts of the law.

A committee was appointed to conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of the regulation of the higher education sector.

Objectives

The goal of the committee's work is to design a framework that clearly describes responsibilities, rights and obligations, both for universities and university colleges, and for students and staff.

Description

The committee proposed:

- (a) a new act for universities and university colleges;
- (b) amendments to the regulations given on the basis of the University and University College Act;
- (c) amendments to the Student Welfare Organisation Act and regulations.

The committee assessed:

- (a) the structure of the regulations, including the relationship between this act and

- national and local regulations;
- (b) the relationship to adjacent laws and regulations;
- (c) provisions on students' rights, learning environment and duties;
- (d) the provisions for examinations and appeals;
- (e) provision for employment, including questions of temporary employment.

The committee, based on the assessments, is to submit a proposal for a new act on universities and university colleges. The committee may consider whether the Student Union Act should be included in this new act. The committee should also consider the efficient use of society's resources.

2020 Legislative process

A proposal was published on 13 February 2020 and underwent a public consultation.

2021 Legislative process

The ministry submitted a proposal for a new law on universities and university colleges to the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) during the spring of 2021.

The recommendations to the law were approved by the Minister of State on 26 March 2021 and come into force in August 2021.

2022 Legislative process

The Ministry of Education and Science submitted amendments to the draft Universities and Colleges Act for public consultation. The public consultation round, together with the legislative changes implemented in 2021 and 2022, NOU 2020: 3 and the consultation input to the NOU, form the basis for a new bill on universities and colleges. The consultation input proposed, amongst other things, changes to the requirement for two examiners for the exams, where one is required to be an external examiner, changes to the rules on temporary employment for staff employed at universities and university colleges and changes to the authority responsible for deciding on the closure of study centres. Study centres offer higher vocational education in rural areas in cooperation with a vocational college. The authority to decide on the closure of study centres is under political control and cannot be decided by the university or university college alone.

2023 Completed

The law was adopted 1.01.2023 and put into effect accordingly.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Research (KD)

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)
Adult learners

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[Link to consultation on NOU 2020:3 New law on universities and colleges](#)

[Link to the university and college committee](#)

[Link to the Universities and University Colleges Act](#)

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). Proposal of a new law on universities and university colleges (NOU 2020: 3): Norway. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/29089>