

Evaluation of the Humanities in Norway

Report from Panel 3 – Nordic and Comparative Literature

Evaluation
Division for Science



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Contents

Summary	4
1 On the evaluation.....	6
1.1 Terms of Reference	6
1.2 The evaluation panels	7
1.3 Methods and Limitations	9
1.3.1 Organisation of the evaluation.....	9
1.3.2 The data available to the panels	10
1.3.3 Criteria used during the evaluations.....	11
1.3.4 Limitations.....	12
1.4 Those evaluated	14
2 Assessment at the national level.....	15
2.1 Bibliometric data	15
2.2 Comparative Literature and Nordic Literature.....	16
2.3 Staffing	17
2.4 Recommendations	17
2.5 Two ways of achieving a higher international profile for the field of Nordic Literature are recommended:.....	18
3 Assessment of institutions and research areas.....	19
3.1 Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Humanities (NTNUHF).....	19
3.2 University of Bergen, Faculty of Humanities (UiBHF).....	22
University of Oslo, Faculty of Humanities (UiOHF)	25
3.3 The Arctic University of Norway UiT, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (UiTHSL).....	28
3.4 University of Agder (UiA).....	31
3.5 Hedmark University of Applied Sciences (HiHm)	34
3.6 Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA)	37
3.7 Telemark University College (University College of Southeast Norway) (HiT).....	40
4 Assessment of research groups.....	42
4.1 UiBHF - History, Rhetoric, and Reception of Literature	42
4.2 UiOHF – Nordic Literary Studies in Flux.....	43
4.3 HiHm Scandinavian Poetry	44
5 Reference list.....	46
6 List of abbreviations used in the reports.....	47
7 List of panel members	50

Summary

Within Nordic and comparative literature (NCL), there is significant variation in the mass of researchers across institutions and in the level of institutional and RCN support for researchers. There is considerable evidence that very fine research is being carried out and that there are well-developed research cultures in pockets across the country, often making very effective use of limited resources. National and international research cooperation is in evidence and could be strengthened further through the RCN's various national schemes to support training and mobility.

Analysis of the data on publication points indicates a high overall increase in productivity in NCL compared with the Humanities in general in the assessment period (...). There was considerable variation in research productivity across institutions (...), however. NCL has one of the highest proportions in the Humanities of publication by monograph; the highest proportion of book chapters, but, as a consequence, the lowest proportion of publication through journal articles compared with the average for the Humanities. Whereas the proportion of publications across the Humanities as a whole in languages other than Scandinavian was 61%, in NCL only 27% of publications were in English and 7% in other languages.

Publications in NCL with international co-authors and co-authors from other Norwegian institutions were the lowest of any field in the Humanities, although this may not reflect the level of national and international networking that is nevertheless enriching research in these fields. The age profile of productive researchers in NCL is broadly in line with the national average for the Humanities, slightly skewed towards researchers over the age of 55 (...) compared with the Humanities overall. The gender balance across this distribution is fairly even in NCL for researchers under 55. For those over 55, the balance tips towards male researchers, a pattern that is also evident across the Humanities in general.

Publications in Nordic and Comparative Literature account for 8% of publications in the Humanities in Norway in the period 2011–2015. There is considerable variation in the balance between Nordic Literature (NL) and Comparative Literature (CL) at different institutions across Norway, at least in terms of publication points earned. The proportion of points accrued nationally through publications at level 2 was slightly higher in Comparative Literature than in Nordic Literature, whereas the proportion of research published in English was slightly higher in Nordic Literature nationally than in Comparative Literature.

The proportion of researchers in NCL who are categorised as being at 'professor level' varies markedly between institutions. There is also variability across institutions in the proportion of permanent researchers who have a PhD. The national average for this measure for NCL is rather low from an international perspective.

The sustainability of NCL nationally and at individual institutions will depend on demographic planning and sound recruitment strategies, particularly to ensure a higher national average of those holding a doctoral qualification.

Recommendations

Overall, the panel recommend giving consideration to the following points:

- In both the field of Comparative Literature and in Nordic Literature, researchers should aspire to a higher international publishing profile (...). Further institutional incentives may be necessary to encourage researchers to embark on ambitious projects resulting in significant monographs that achieve international standards of excellence.
- In the field of Comparative Literature, more weight should be given to the comparative dimension and to the international scope of the discipline.
- More resources should be directed towards boosting the productivity of early-career researchers at smaller institutions aspiring to university status (...).
- There is considerable potential for cross-fertilisation between research in Nordic Literature and research in Comparative Literature (...), and the existing composition of most departments could better facilitate this.
- The value of a regional focus for particular institutions is acknowledged and should continue to be exploited within the context of a scholarly environment that is engaged in research at an international level. At some institutions, researchers in the field of Nordic Literature may be constrained in their research area by the imperatives of the teaching syllabus, but it should be noted that the quality of teaching will be enhanced by greater engagement, through research, with currents in international literary studies.
- The panel observed the importance, at the institutional level, of strong leadership and a clearly formulated research strategy. Where the formation of more research groups is part of the strategy, it is important that the group be understood as amounting to more than the sum of its individual researchers.

1 On the evaluation

One of the duties of the Research Council of Norway is to conduct field evaluations of Norwegian research, that is, evaluations of how entire fields or disciplines are performing in Norway. These have two purposes: to provide an international view and feedback on performance, and to support the development of research policy. By tradition, the evaluated field has been given an opportunity to form a committee to decide how to learn from and change practices based on the evaluation. In many cases, the RCN has then provided some funding to help implement measures proposed by the committee.

The practice of field evaluation is long established in Norway. In the past, such evaluations have confined themselves to one or a small number of individual disciplines, such as Philosophy and the History of Ideas, Law or History. In 2011, the RCN published a wider evaluation of Biology, Medicine and Healthcare. In 2015, it published an evaluation of the fundamental Engineering Sciences. In 2016 it launched this evaluation of the Humanities as a whole and it has more recently started a similar evaluation of the Social Sciences. This evaluation of the Humanities could potentially spearhead a new and even broader field evaluation practice.

1.1 Terms of Reference

The task of this evaluation is to

- Review the scientific quality of Norwegian research in the Humanities in an international context
- Provide a critical review of the strengths and weaknesses of the fields of research within the humanities – nationally, at the institutional level and for a number of designated research groups
- Identify the research groups that have achieved a high international level in their research, or that have the potential to achieve such a level
- Investigate the extent of interdisciplinary research at the institutions and in the research groups
- Review the role of the Research Council of Norway in funding research activities in the humanities
- Investigate the connection between research and teaching activities
- Discuss the organisation of research activities and the role of the Humanities in the strategic plans of the evaluated institutions
- Assess the extent to which previous evaluations have been used by the institutions in their strategic planning
- Identify areas of research that need to be strengthened in order to ensure that Norway possesses the necessary competence in areas of national importance in future
- Discuss the societal impact of Humanities research in Norway in general and, in particular, its potential to address targeted societal challenges as defined in the Norwegian Government's Long-term Plan for Research and Higher education, and the EU framework programme Horizon 2020

The government's Long-term Plan for Research (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2014) prioritises the following areas

- The sea
- Climate, the environment and environmentally friendly energy
- Renewal of the public sector and more efficient welfare and health services
- Enabling technologies
- An innovative and flexible business sector, able to restructure as needed
- World-leading research groups

These priorities co-exist with a longer-term set of reforms aimed at increasing the quality of Norwegian research.

A recent analysis of the quality of Norwegian research as indicated by bibliometric evidence suggests that there are two dimensions to the need to improve quality (Benner, 2015). The average level of quality (measured by the field-normalised citation rate of Norwegian research as a whole) has risen to match that of Sweden, placing it among the stronger countries worldwide. However, Norway lacks research groups that publish in the most-cited 10% and 1% of articles worldwide. The Humanities are poorly served by bibliometric indicators, so Benner's analysis may be less applicable to the Humanities than to other fields, although it appears consistent with the judgements of the panel conducting this evaluation. Nonetheless, Norwegian research policy is likely to place increasing emphasis on the need not only further to raise the average quality, but also to develop and sustain some world-leading groups (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2014) (Hatlem, Melby, & Arnold, 2017). The focus on quality in this evaluation therefore responds to an important policy need.

At the same time, in Norway – as in other countries – there is also increasing pressure for research to be able to demonstrate its societal value. Both aspects are tackled in this evaluation.

1.2 The evaluation panels

The evaluation has been carried out by eight field panels comprising international peers, each of which evaluated one or more disciplines. The composition of the panels is shown in Appendix D. Their reports are published in separate volumes.

Panel 1 Aesthetic Studies

Panel 2 Nordic Languages and Linguistics

Panel 3 Nordic and Comparative Literature

Panel 4 Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies

Panel 5 Archaeology, History and Cultural Studies

Panel 6 Philosophy and Studies in Science and Technology

Panel 7 Religion and Theology

Panel 8 Media Studies

Table 1 shows which panels cover which disciplines.

The chairs of the panels have formed an overall evaluation panel – referred to in the Terms of Reference as the principal committee – which is responsible for reporting on the Humanities as a whole.

The tasks of the field panels specified in the terms of reference were to

- Evaluate research activities with respect to scientific quality, and national and international collaboration. Focus on research published in peer-reviewed publications

- Evaluate the relevance and impact of the evaluated research activities
- Evaluate how research activities are organised and managed
- Submit a report with specific recommendations for the future development of research within the subject fields encompassed by the panel, including means of improvement when necessary

Table 1 Overview of the field and panel structure

Panel	Panel name	Discipline
1	Aesthetic Studies	Dance
		Art History
		Musicology
		Theatre and Drama
2	Nordic Languages and Linguistics	Linguistics
		Nordic Language
		Norwegian as a Second Language
		Sámi and Finnish
		Sign Language and Interpretation
3	Nordic and Comparative Literature	Literature
		Nordic Literature
4	Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies	Asian and African Studies
		English Studies
		Classical Studies
		Romance Studies
		Slavonic Studies
		Germanic Studies

5	Archaeology, History and Cultural Studies	Archaeology and Conservation
		History
		Cultural Studies
6	Philosophy and Studies in Science and Technology	Philosophy and History of Ideas
		Science and Technology Studies
7	Religion and Theology	Theology and Religion
8	Media Studies	Media and Communication

Note 1: Researchers in History of Ideas were in most cases submitted to Panel 5

Note 2: The national academic council for Gender research is not included as RCN is planning a separate evaluation of Gender research in Norway

1.3 Methods and Limitations

1.3.1 Organisation of the evaluation

The evaluation addressed four different levels (Figure 1). At the highest level, this report evaluates the field of Humanities in Norway as a whole. To do so, it synthesises and analyses the reports of the eight discipline panels.

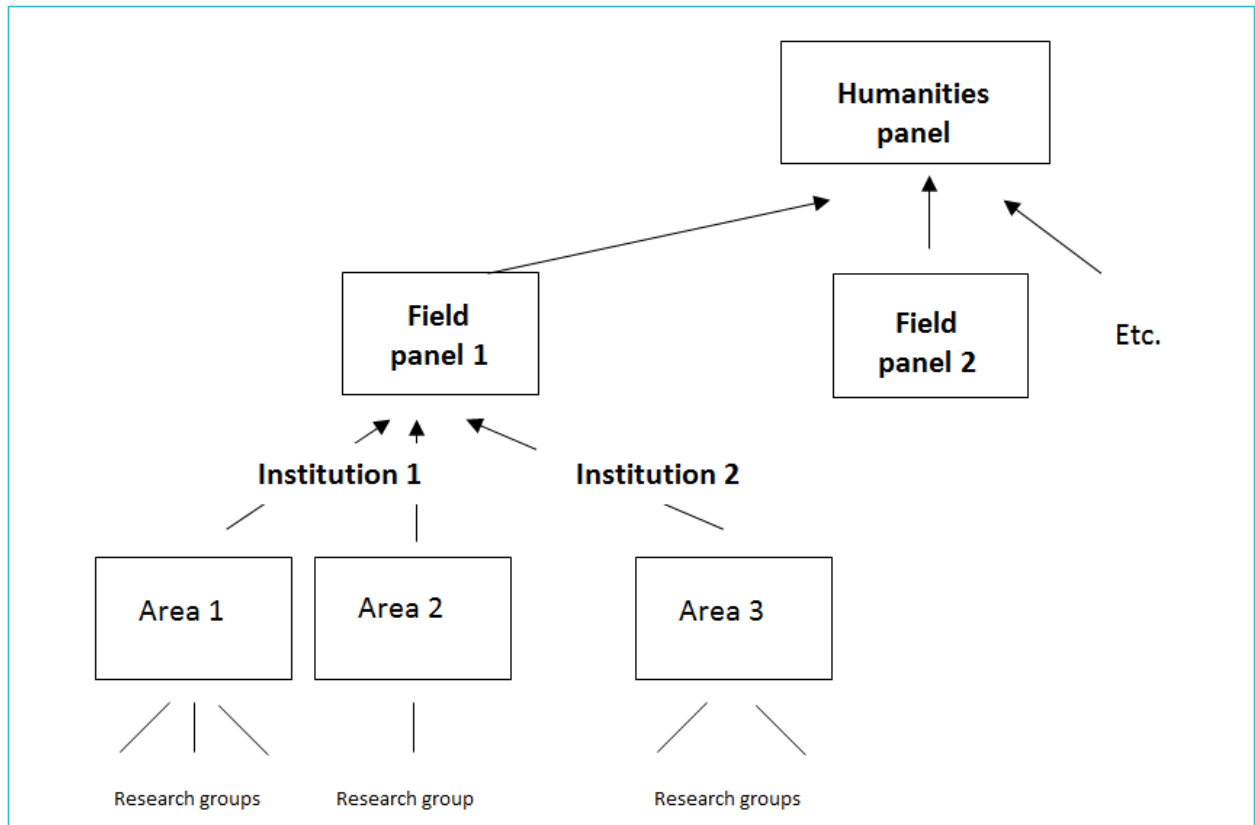
The division of the field of Humanities into panels was based on the established organisational structure of national academic councils (Nasjonale fagråd). There are 24 such academic councils, reflecting the historical development of research areas and teaching subjects within the Humanities in Norway. To avoid a very fragmented panel structure, the research areas of the academic councils were grouped into eight panels based on disciplinary similarities. For the purpose of this evaluation, the area of research and study covered by a specific academic council is referred to as a 'research area'.

The panels were asked to evaluate both research areas and research groups based on the following information.

- Each participating institution was asked to provide a list of its staff working within the Humanities and to indicate the most relevant research area for each staff member. The institutions also provided a self-assessment for each of the relevant panels, with a description of their research activities and results within each research area, as well as about the interplay of research and teaching and other societal impact.
- To support the panels' assessment of research areas, the RCN has provided a bibliometric analysis of all publications by listed researchers for each panel.
- The organisations were also invited to put individual research groups forward for evaluation within each area. The field panels evaluated them individually and also used these research group evaluations to support their area evaluations.

The universities and institutes have themselves decided which parts of their organisation to submit to the evaluation. The coverage of the evaluation is therefore not complete, but is likely to encompass the most significant research-active entities across the Humanities in Norway. Areas do not necessarily map directly onto organisational structures. For consistency, this evaluation refers to these submitted entities as 'areas'.

Figure 1 Structure of the Evaluation



1.3.2 The data available to the panels

The data available to the panels were

- **Self-assessment reports** provided by the research-performing organisations. (The template for these is reproduced in **Feil! Fant ikke referanseilden.**). There is one for each area. A self-assessment report comprises a report firstly at the level of the organisation (most often at the faculty or research institute level), and, secondly, information about an area. The organisation-level information is repeated across multiple self-assessments. So, for example, UiO's self-assessment for the Aesthetics field will comprise an initial section about the University of Oslo as a whole and a second part about the work of UiO in aesthetic disciplines.
- A **bibliometric report** from NIFU (Aksnes & Gunnes, 2016) that provides field indicators at the national, organisational and area level
- **Funding data** from the RCN
- Examples of **scholarly outputs** from areas and groups submitted by the research-performing organisations

- **Societal impact statements** from individual areas. These have been inspired by the use of impact statements in the UK Research Excellence Framework. They are free-text accounts from the researchers of societal impacts they believe research in their area has had over a period of up to fifteen years
- **Survey data from NOKUT** about student views on teaching

Building from the bottom

- The assessments of individual scholarly outputs fed into the group and area evaluations
- The group evaluations fed into the area evaluations
- The report on personnel and publications (bibliometrics) was considered at the area level
- Impact statements were considered at the area level
- The area evaluations were used by the field panels to build a picture of national performance within the field covered by the panel reports
- The field evaluations are used by the main panel to construct the national HUMEVAL evaluation

Panellists met representatives of the areas evaluated in a series of one to two-hour interviews, in which they were able to check their understanding of the data submitted for evaluation.

1.3.3 Criteria used during the evaluations

The panels based their work on a consistent set of criteria, against which they reported their findings at the area level. These were

- Organisation, leadership and strategy
- Availability and use of resources
- Research production and quality
- Recruitment and training
- Networking with other researchers, nationally and internationally
- Impact on teaching
- Societal impact
- Overall assessment and feedback

Research group reports consider

- Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources
- Research production and quality
- Recruitment and training
- Networking with other researchers, nationally and internationally
- Impact on teaching
- Overall assessment and feedback

Impact was judged in terms of the reach and significance of the impact reported.

- **Reach:** The extent and/or diversity of the organisations, communities and/or individuals who have benefited from the impact.
- **Significance:** The degree to which the impact enriched, influenced, informed or changed the policies, practices, understanding or awareness of organisations, communities or individuals.

In each case, the panels wrote full-text evaluations, which are reported in a separate volume for each panel. They also awarded scores using a series of 5-point Likert scales. These were used internally in

order to gain an overview of the many parts of the evaluation. Only the grades for research groups' overall performance and research quality have been published (in accordance with the Terms of Reference).

1.3.4 Limitations

An exercise such as this inevitably suffers from limitations. This section briefly describes the main limitations of which the panels are aware.

Humanities in Norway does not have a strongly developed evaluation culture. There have been a number of field evaluations with a narrower scope than the present one in recent years, but Norwegian Humanities researchers are not often subject to evaluation unless they are working in an externally-funded centre of excellence. Humanities are also generally less exposed to the need for external, competitive funding from sources such as the RCN, reducing the extent to which scholars need to subject themselves to external assessment, compared with scholars in many other fields. As a result, at least parts of the community have limited experience of how to deal with an evaluation and how to communicate with the evaluators in ways that will enable positive judgements. This is particularly the case in relation to the use of impact statements, which is a novel technique everywhere. Clearly, those with a more developed evaluation culture will be better placed than others to receive a positive evaluation.

The panels worked on the basis of a limited set of data and information. The sources used were mainly

- The self-assessments of the institutions and research groups
- The (small number of) publications submitted by the institutions
- The personnel and publication analysis
- A report on the interplay of research and teaching in the Humanities
- A report on research organisation and external engagement in the Humanities
- Interviews with representatives of the institutions, and national data on publication performance and student satisfaction

The panels could not check the information provided by the institutions against information found elsewhere. Further, institutions and groups did not always specify what they saw as their contributions to knowledge in various fields, so that the panels have had to make their own decisions about the disciplines and areas to which individual research activities are relevant.

The request for self-evaluation data was not uniformly understood by the institutions, suggesting that, in future, equivalent requests could be made more explicit. The number of sample publications requested was low and the processes used to select them are not clear to the panels. Whatever process the universities used, it involves a positive bias. This is a normal feature of such evaluations and the panels regard it as unproblematic: injecting a positive bias means that it is known what sort of bias there is. However, the representativity of the publications submitted is unclear. The fact that some groups submitted publications that were not peer-reviewed was a further complication.

Universities followed different strategies in responding to the request. For example, the number of research groups submitted varied considerably. Some of the groups appeared to have been constructed artificially for the purpose of the evaluation. Others appeared to be groups of people who normally worked together. This variability makes comparisons difficult. The focus on groups also complicates the identification of individual, outstanding talent. It also does not always reflect

the way in which Humanities researchers work, since individual scholarship as opposed to group work is more normal than in the social and 'hard' sciences. There is significant variation among disciplines and panels in their perception of the appropriateness of using research groups as units of assessment. So the divide is as much within the Humanities as between the Humanities and the hard sciences. However, it should also be noted that most of the universities have policies in place to support research groups.

Both NOKUT and NIFU provided data to support the evaluation, based on existing statistical and disciplinary categories. As a result, they do not always match the scope of the areas or groups evaluated by the panels, so that, while they provided useful, broad indications, the panels had to treat them with some caution. NIFU's bibliometric analyses were very helpful. However, the particular weaknesses of bibliometric approaches to the Humanities, a field in which a great deal is published outside the channels normally used for bibliometric analysis, mean that bibliometric indicators present a picture that is even more partial in the Humanities than in other fields.

Participation in the RCN's field evaluations is optional and there are no incentives (such as an effect on funding) for participation, so that their coverage is inevitably partial. The panels are aware that some significant groups are missing from this evaluation, so that the evaluation does not cover the entire field.

It is important to note that the traditional universities in Norway, on the one hand, and the new universities and the university colleges, on the other, have different amounts of institutional research funding. In principle, in the old universities, academics have sufficient funds to split their time equally between teaching and research. At the newer universities and university colleges, the institutional funding covers a much smaller percentage of research time, typically of the order of 20%, though there is wide variation among individual institutions. Only the Norwegian Academy of Music is under 10% (7%), whereas the others are typically between 15 and 30%. Some – but not all – of these institutions actively manage research time, allocating more to some and less to others. These very different funding conditions mean that expectations of research productivity per person should not be the same for the old and the new institutions.

Disciplines and fields differ in terms of what they regard as knowledge or quality and the extent to which they make 'progress', so that knowledge is cumulative rather than comprising many parallel forms of knowledge. A uniform understanding of these dimensions across the whole of the Humanities would therefore not be appropriate; they must be judged within their own disciplinary contexts. The panel approach of using peers in relevant fields to make judgements addresses this issue. While this inconsistency might be regarded as a weakness, the panels regard it as a strength, because discipline-relevant criteria are used in each case in order to compare performance with an international benchmark.

These limitations mean that this evaluation is to some degree an exercise in hermeneutics and collegial advice, rather than in exact measurements and objective results. The panels based their work on an attitude of solidarity with the colleagues and institutions under review. In cases of doubt about information, a charitable interpretation of the data was chosen. The panel also tried to formulate critical feedback in as constructive a way as possible.

1.4 Those evaluated

The evaluation covered Humanities research at 36 research-performing organisations. Eight of these institutions participated in the panel for Nordic and Comparative Literature.

Table 2 Research-performing organisations participating in panel 3 – Nordic and Comparative Literature

	University faculties	No of Researchers	No of Research Groups
Norwegian University of Science and Technology	NTNU Faculty of Humanities	18	
University of Bergen	UiB Faculty of Humanities	29	1
University of Oslo	UiO Faculty of Humanities	50	1
The Arctic University of Norway (UiT)	UiT Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education	18	
University of Agder	University of Agder	14	
	Other HE-institutions		
	Hedmark University College	7	1
	Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences	10	
	Telemark University College	6	

2 Assessment at the national level

With only three research groups submitted for assessment to this panel, and with just a handful of publications accompanying the institutional self-evaluations for the area, our assessment is necessarily based on a small sample of the research being carried out across Norway in Nordic and Comparative Literature (NCL), where a total of 168 researchers were selected for evaluation (Appendix Table 1.11). In addition to that number, a considerable number of researchers whose work falls within the broad category of comparative literature are being assessed by other panels (we have also considered research groups relevant to our area that were submitted to Panel 4 (Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies). Within NCL, there is significant variation in the mass of researchers across institutions (ranging from 50 in Oslo to 6 in Telemark) and in the level of institutional and RCN support for researchers. This makes it difficult to reach a summary assessment of the state of the field at the national level. There is nonetheless considerable evidence that very fine research is being carried out and that there are well-developed research cultures in pockets across the country, often making very effective use of limited resources. National and international research cooperation is in evidence and could be strengthened further through the RCN's various national schemes to support training and mobility.

2.1 Bibliometric data

Given the challenge of extrapolating from the limited evidence presented in institutional submissions, bibliometric data have been drawn on here to make some broad observations. Analysis of the data on publication points indicates an overall increase in productivity in NCL in the assessment period 2011–2015. While the number of points across the Humanities increased by 7.8% during this period, the increase was over 16% for NCL (Fig. 3.2). There was considerable variation in research productivity across institutions in NCL, however. The average percentage of researchers accruing no points over the five-year assessment period was 26% – roughly in line with Humanities in general – but the figure for Oslo was higher at 30%, and 33% for NTNU. The below average percentage of researchers with no publication points was impressive for Bergen (19%) and for some of the smaller institutions (Oslo and Akershus 20%, Hedmark 14% and Agder 0% (Appendix Table 1.3)). These last three institutions also performed well in terms of the percentage of researchers accruing more than four publication points: both Hedmark and Agder equalled the national average for the Humanities of 43% on this measure, with Oslo and Akershus at 50%. On the same measure, some of the larger institutions came in below the national average: Oslo had only 40% of its researchers accruing more than four publication points and NTNU 39%.

Although bibliometric data cannot by itself provide a full and accurate picture of research quality, some patterns emerge through the comparison of NCL with the Humanities in general in terms of publication type and the language in which research is published. NCL has one of the highest proportions in the Humanities of publication by monograph (6% compared with 4% for the Humanities overall, Table 3.5); the highest proportion of book chapters (47%, compared with 40% overall), but, as a consequence, the lowest proportion of publication through journal articles (48%, compared with the 56% average for the Humanities). On this last measure, some institutions were closer to the national average (Bergen 52%, Tromsø 51% and Telemark 50%), while others were well below it (Appendix Table 1.3). The proportion of each institution's points deriving from level 2

publications was also some way below the national average for the Humanities (23%), ranging from 15% downwards (Appendix Table 1.3).

Whereas the proportion of publications across the Humanities as a whole in languages other than Scandinavian was 61%, in NCL only 27% of publications were in English and 7% in other languages. While there are good reasons why a higher than average proportion of publications in the field of Nordic Literature might be in a Scandinavian language, it is striking that, in the neighbouring fields of Nordic Languages and Linguistics, the proportion of publications in English equals the average for the Humanities overall (56%) (Table 3.6). Across individual institutions, the proportion of points accrued through publications in English varied: the highest was Oslo (34%), followed by NTNU (26%), Tromsø (22%), and Bergen and Telemark (20%) (Appendix Table 1.3).

Publications in NCL with international co-authors (4%) and co-authors from other Norwegian institutions (3%) were the lowest of any field in the Humanities (where the averages are 14% and 7%, Table 3.8), although this may not reflect the level of national and international networking that is nevertheless enriching research in these fields.

The age profile of productive researchers in NCL is broadly in line with the national average for the Humanities (Table 3.9), slightly skewed towards researchers over the age of 55 and away from researchers under 40 compared with the Humanities overall. The gender balance across this distribution is fairly even in NCL for researchers under 55. For those over 55, the balance tips towards male researchers (who accrue 26% of points in contrast to female researchers, who accrue 16%), a pattern that is also evident across the Humanities in general (24% for males over 55, compared with 11% for females in the same age bracket). The proportion of research in NCL published in journals by researchers over 55 is one of the lowest in the Humanities (41%, compared with 51% for all Humanities), with NCL researchers in the age bracket 40–55 having the lowest proportion across all Humanities fields for that bracket (46%, compared with 56%). The proportion of research published in journals by researchers under 40 in NCL is slightly above the average, however (69%, average 68%; Table 3.11). Publication in English is uniformly very low across age brackets for researchers in NCL, with no uplift from the under 40s. While the average proportion of research published in English by researchers under 40 is 66% across the Humanities overall, in NCL it is 27% (Table 3.12).

2.2 Comparative Literature and Nordic Literature

Publications in Nordic and Comparative Literature account for 8% of publications in the Humanities in Norway in the period 2011–2015, with NCL researchers accruing 1324 points between them (NIFU: Table 3.2). The contribution of ‘Literature’ was 4.4% (759 points) and Nordic Literature 3.3% (566 points) (Table 3.3), which suggests that the proportion of each field to the whole is 57% (Comparative Literature) and 43% (Nordic Literature). The number of researchers submitted for assessment in each category is roughly equivalent, however: 82 researchers in Comparative Literature and 84 in Nordic Literature (Appendix 1.1).

There is considerable variation in the balance between Nordic Literature (NL) and Comparative Literature (CL) at different institutions across Norway, at least in terms of publication points earned. The relative national share at a sample of institutions is as follows: Oslo 44% NL/24%CL; Bergen 18% NL/24% CL; Tromsø 8% NL/13% CL; and Agder 6% NL/14% CL (Appendix Table 1.4). The proportion of points accrued nationally through publications at level 2 was slightly higher in Comparative Literature (15%) than in Nordic Literature (11%), whereas the proportion of research published in English was slightly higher in Nordic Literature nationally (25%) than in Comparative Literature (21%) (Appendix Table 1.5).

2.3 Staffing

The proportion of researchers in NCL who are categorised as being at ‘professor level’ varies markedly between institutions, as the following percentages show: 100% (Telemark), 67% (Hedmark), 67% (NTNU), 58% (Bergen), 55% (Tromsø), 50% (Oslo), 40% (Oslo and Akershus), and 36% (Agder) (Appendix Table 1.12). The variation is explained in part by the presence of post-doctoral researchers at some institutions (accounting for 13% of researchers at Bergen, 12% at Oslo and 11% at NTNU and Tromsø), and the existence of the post of lecturer at some institutions (Agder, Tromsø, NTNU and Oslo). There is also variability across institutions in the proportion of permanent researchers who have a PhD. The national average for this measure for NCL is 73%, which, from an international perspective, seems rather low. It is lowest at Agder (36%), although it is also noteworthy that only 68% of permanent researchers in NCL in the Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies at Oslo hold doctorates.

Most institutions have achieved a reasonable gender balance – the share of women in NCL nationally is 52% – with the notable exception of the NCL component of the Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies at Bergen, where the share is only 31%.

The sustainability of NCL nationally and at individual institutions will depend on demographic planning and sound recruitment strategies, particularly to ensure a higher national average of those holding a doctoral qualification.

2.4 Recommendations

Overall, we recommend giving consideration to the following points:

- In both the field of Comparative Literature and in Nordic Literature, researchers should aspire to a higher international publishing profile, something that could be achieved, in part, by targeting prestigious international university presses. Further institutional incentives may be necessary to encourage researchers to embark on ambitious projects resulting in significant monographs that achieve international standards of excellence.
- In the field of Comparative Literature, more weight should be given to the comparative dimension and to the international scope of the discipline.
- More resources should be directed towards boosting the productivity of early-career researchers at smaller institutions aspiring to university status (either through more generous research leave and/or lower teaching loads).
- There is considerable potential for cross-fertilisation between research in Nordic Literature and research in Comparative Literature (while maintaining the distinctive profile of each discipline), and the existing composition of most departments could better facilitate this.
- The value of a regional focus for particular institutions is acknowledged and should continue to be exploited within the context of a scholarly environment that is engaged in research at an international level. At some institutions, researchers in the field of Nordic Literature may be constrained in their research area by the imperatives of the teaching syllabus, but it should be noted that the quality of teaching will be enhanced by greater engagement, through research, with currents in international literary studies.
- The panel observed the importance, at the institutional level, of strong leadership and a clearly formulated research strategy. Where the formation of more research groups is part of the strategy, it is important that the group be understood as amounting to more than the sum of its individual researchers.

2.5 Two ways of achieving a higher international profile for the field of Nordic Literature are recommended:

1. The first is through individual researchers grounding their research in contemporary thematic, methodological and/or theoretical frameworks of international literary studies. Pursuing this line will involve all researchers attending international conferences and aiming to publish at least some of their research through international presses or in international journals. Such an enterprise would make the field of Nordic Literature more visible in the global literary studies discussion. This mode of internationalisation would also entail the publication of more research in this field in one of the major languages of western literary studies.
2. The other line would be to create a strong environment for international research on Nordic Literature at Norwegian universities by gathering experts on Nordic Literature from outside Norway (the US, the UK, Germany, Poland, Italy etc.). This second line would clearly strengthen Norwegian as a natural language for research in the field of Nordic Literature and strengthen the level 2 journals in literary studies that welcome the publication of research in Scandinavian languages.

These two lines should complement one another: strengthening research on Nordic literature in an international context and tying international research on Nordic literature to a Norwegian context.

3 Assessment of institutions and research areas

3.1 Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Humanities (NTNUHF)

In 2016 The Faculty of Humanities at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNUHF) underwent a merger that made NTNUHF one of eight faculties at NTNU, containing six departments of varying size. The merger is effective from 1 January 2017. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of NTNUHF decreased from NOK 176 million (2013) to NOK 163 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure has increased, however, from 32% to 34% in the same period. RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by private Norwegian sources. Moreover, funding from the EU constitutes a relatively sizeable share of the total external funding (NOK 7 million in 2013 and NOK 8 million in 2015).

Within the research area of Nordic and Comparative Literature, NTNUHF listed 18 researchers for HUMEVAL. The institution submitted one research area publication, but no impact case studies. During the project, the evaluation committee interviewed representatives from the institution.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The Faculty of Humanities will become one of eight faculties in the current merger with former university colleges. The faculty describes itself as having a 'unified leadership model', with leaders appointed at all levels and frequent meetings between the dean, the vice-deans for Research and for Education and six heads of department. It nonetheless notes that there is 'lack of enthusiasm for strategic goals and priorities in some parts of the organisation' (SWOT). While strategic planning is under way within the faculty, it is unclear how broader engagement with institutional aims will be achieved.

The faculty's vision is to be a 'humanistic force' in a technology-oriented institution, participating in projects such as one on environmentally-friendly energy research. The self-assessment document provides little detail on how the field of Nordic and Comparative Literature is being integrated into the institution's goals for 2012–2020 (set out in the strategic document 'Knowledge for a Better World').

In recent years, priority has been given to establishing research groups through 'Spydspiss' (spearhead) projects, and administrative assistance is given to research groups to foster international collaboration. Seed funding is also provided for projects that have narrowly missed out on RCN funding. The success rate seems to have been improved by the introduction of the 'critical reader' system.

The faculty has hosted fellows and projects as part of the Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Programme, but none of them have been in the field of Nordic and Comparative Literature. A strategy for the integration of the Humanities and Social Sciences has been developed to rethink how the Humanities can contribute to H2020 research. There is a strong focus on humanities research and its significance to teacher education.

NTNU regards research excellence as a strategic priority: fundamental practices such as internal peer reviewing do not always seem to be in place, however, judging by the interview responses. Research groups are the central plank of the research strategy, which aspires to have more groups within five years, all of which will have attracted external funding. It is also a strategic goal to have at least five permanent researchers in the area of Nordic and Comparative Literature.

Resources

Core funding from the Norwegian government amounted to NOK 328 million in 2015, which is 18% of the national expenditure on the Humanities in Norway (second highest nationally).

In 2005, RCN funded two major research projects after the evaluation of Linguistics and Literature, which contributed to the establishment of two research groups in the section. It is unclear what results the groups have achieved and whether funding is still continuing. Additional external funding amounting to approx. NOK 57.000 annually is reported, but this level is decreasing and there has also been a decrease in funding due to falling student numbers (especially at MA level).

Professorial researchers have a 47/47 ratio for teaching and research; assistant professors, however, only have a 75/25 ratio.

There is sabbatical leave provision for all permanent academic staff, with researchers encouraged to spend their leave abroad. However, it seems that only around 10% of researchers have spent research time abroad.

The library and its resources (and high-quality staff, often holding a PhD) have a strong presence in the university.

Research production and quality

Eighteen researchers in NCL achieved just 57 publication points, with 6 accruing no points at all (average 3.2, below the national average for NCL of 4.2). Only 15% of the points were at level 2, with 36% from publications in journals and 26% from publications in English.

Of the 18 researchers in NCL, 12 are appointments at professorial level, while 3 are recruitment positions. A very high proportion of permanent researchers hold a PhD.

Research output is geared towards high-quality scholarly and artistic endeavours, with quality safeguarded through external peer-reviewing of several 'spearhead' research projects. These groups are prioritised over individuals. PhDs and postdoctoral positions have been allocated to the projects. Joint publications with PhD students appear to be an effective measure.

Research is conducted in the areas of Comparative Literature and specifically Scandinavian Literature, with more extensive collaboration between these two fields than elsewhere in Norway, it is claimed. There are three focus areas: i) the modern breakthrough of the 1800s; ii) modernism in the 1900s; and iii) contemporary literature and media. Research relating to teacher education is also regarded as a strategic area by the institution and projects are ongoing in this area (with specific funding for teaching excellence). Some publications are textbooks.

It is not clear whether the two major research projects that have been undertaken since 2008 ('Transcultural Aesthetics' and 'The History of Literary Critical Reception in Norway 1870–2000') were supported by external funding.

Earlier success, with the Spydspiss project 'Enlightenment News', led to Trondheim having a high international profile, but it is unclear how this is now being capitalised on.

Recruitment and training

There is a strong drive to remedy gender imbalance, and strategic steps have been taken, as in the RCN- and NTNU-funded project 'Making Gender Balance from Below', which seeks to create gender balance in senior positions. It is a new, bottom-up policy, but it is still unclear how this contributes to remedying the imbalance.

Procedures are in place to try to address the problem of individuals not publishing research. NTNU, like many other institutions in Norway, seems to be undergoing a generational shift. The system of incentives to increase research productivity seems to be working very well.

Networking

International mobility, internationalisation of programmes of study, and participation in the knowledge society have been given top priority between 2014 and 2017, and financial incentives and administrative support are being provided to further internationalisation. Funding is made available through NRC-funded projects and by the faculty.

Research grants that involve international collaboration are advertised twice a year and international conferences are organised every year (though no details are given about their level or reach). In 2015 NTNU established an office in Brussels to increase participation in the H2020 programme.

Impact on teaching

The work that the section does is very important for teacher training, which is a key strategic area for NTNU. The freedom to design courses at MA level is a positive response to linking research and teaching. The section hosts one of the projects that has received funding through NTNU Teaching Excellence: a literature laboratory for teacher training students specialising in Nordic studies.

The Faculty hosts PROSJEKTIL, which improves university teachers' competence in innovative teaching methods.

Other societal impact

There is no clear description of societal impact beyond the factors described above: 1] that the Faculty as a whole is participating in research to make a better world, and 2] the strong focus on teaching.

Overall assessment

Overall, the research strategy is well formulated and tightly organised, if not always effectively, as it seems that the previous strategic plan was not committed to at all levels (see SWOT). NTNU came across very well during interviews, and the panel got the impression that the research culture is strong.

Feedback

The area has hosted high-profile projects in the past, but it remains unclear how successful new projects have been (in terms of funding, publications, international collaboration etc.).

Incentives to promote more peer-reviewed publications (and higher research productivity across the board) need to be monitored to assess their effectiveness.

The strategy to promote long-term stays abroad for staff members might also need to be reviewed to ensure that it is effective. Overall, the strategy of hiring new staff to improve the quality of research seems promising.

3.2 University of Bergen, Faculty of Humanities (UiBHF)

Established in 1948, the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Bergen (UiBHF) has five departments and two inter-faculty centres. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of the Faculty of Humanities increased from NOK 206.1 million (2013) to NOK 234 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure has also increased from 21.7% to 22.9% in the same period. RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by private Norwegian sources. Some modest EU-funding is also documented throughout the period (NOK 4.8 million per year on average).

Within the research area of Nordic and Comparative Literature, 31 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: one research group (History, Rhetoric and Reception), three impact case studies and two research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives from the institution during the project

Organisation, leadership and strategy

Bergen has a devolved managerial structure, from faculty to school. This means that its research priorities are set at the departmental level, and that intellectual leadership is set at the local, disciplinary level. In terms of long-term strategy, Bergen has ambitions to host Centres of Excellence and research clusters (e.g. in Medieval Studies), and it prioritises cross-disciplinary and cross-faculty research. Interview responses suggest that the research strategy could be better managed, particularly with regard to ensuring that all publications are registered, as well as ensuring that the internationalisation strategy is effective. The presentation of the research group was not as coherent and rigorous as might have been expected; overall, the panel was left with the impression that research leadership could be stronger.

Resources

In terms of financial resources, the increasing level of research funding from RCN seems to be very encouraging for Bergen (a 50% increase from 2013 to 2015).

Research production and quality

The 46-46-8 model for staff time indicates a generous research allowance – but this also means that staff should be expected to be very productive; 4.8 publication points per person suggests a reasonably productive environment, although it is worth noting that this is not as high as some universities with a significantly less generous allocation of research time.

It is impressive that the department has hosted a number of major journals (e.g. *Edda, Norsk litteraturvitenskapelig tidsskrift*), as well as several projects ('The Dramaturgy of Judicial Murder', 'Ideologies of Holberg', 'Quality and Criteria in Literary Criticism'). It seems to be particularly strong in the area of Old Norse (especially with regard to producing teaching resources), as well as in Scandinavian Studies. In terms of Comparative Literature, recent developments are encouraging: the Arts Council of Norway-funded project 'Quality and Criteria in Literary Criticism', the research groups 'Text, Action, Space' and 'Radical Philosophy and Literature', Centre for Humanistic Legal Studies, and the recently established cluster on Enlightenment Studies, suggest that interesting things are happening within the area. (See also the separate assessments of research groups by this panel and Panel 4 Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies.)

That said, the self-assessment document gives the impression that institutional support for research that is not externally funded is waning. The percentage of work published at level 2 (12/13%) is also arguably too low. This may correlate with the numbers of monographs (Nordic and Comp Lit only represent 5% of monographs published in the Humanities), as well as with the places of publication (and possibly also with the language of publication). In any case, it seems reasonable to hope for a greater amount of work at level 2 from a leading department of this size, ambition and research resources. Responses during interviews suggest that there is no real strategy for international publishing, beyond the sense that younger scholars will one day change the culture.

Of the two articles submitted, Article 1 (on Ibsen and Kierkegaard) is thoroughly researched and pleasingly sceptical of overstated claims to 'influence', although it also suffers from this scepticism, since what could have been a decisive case is left unproven. Article 2 is the stronger of the two, offering a wide-ranging and well-documented introduction to textual criticism and editing that is very impressive on its own terms.

Recruitment and training

Recruitment at Bergen is increasingly international (especially at PhD level), and there are reasonably healthy numbers of PhD students. That said, responses during interviews suggested that the PhD programme in the Humanities is not of a high enough standard to make graduate students internationally and nationally competitive. This is worrying. It would also seem that more could be done as regards supporting postdocs.

The gender balance follows a familiar but regrettable pattern in the Humanities: a high number of women at the bottom of the career spectrum, and far fewer towards the top end. Of the senior lecturers, 44% are women, a ratio that has remained nearly unchanged since 2010. In the category of professor, women accounted for 27% in 2015, compared to 35% in 2010. More international hiring has been done, and an anti-discrimination strategy is in place, but it remains unclear how effective recent efforts have been.

Networking

PhD students at Bergen seem to be increasingly spending time abroad. This is important, since it creates networks for both the individuals and the institution. There seems to be resistance to sending staff abroad, however, judging by the interview responses (at least in Panel 5 Archaeology, History and Cultural Studies).

There are also some impressive major projects with international structures ('Holberg', 'Literary Criticism'), as well as numerous networks and ongoing editorial projects.

Impact on teaching

The Old Norse Studies milieu has organised many lecture series and events, both for a scholarly audience and for the general public. The milieu has long been had a leading role nationally in the field of teaching resources, having produced a grammar of Old Norse, *Norröne Grammatik im Überblick* (2013), *Norrøn grammatikk i hovuddrag* (2015), as well as a handbook, *Altnordische Philologie* (2007) and *Handbok i norrøn filologi* (2013).

Other societal impact

A substantial proportion of the research activities in comparative literature, both collaborative and individual, is related to public dissemination (*formidling*) in different media, newspaper, journals, broadcasting and public arenas (Litteraturhuset, theatre etc.).

The three Bergen impact cases – NorLitCrit, CritGender and HumLegal – are all characterised by a willingness to engage with a wider audience based on a well-defined research focus. None of the groups has had societal impact as a high priority and the impact is difficult to measure. However, they can each document very sensible use of both public lectures and contributions in the press and other news media that add up to a reasonable and qualified level of engagement.

Overall assessment

The disciplines of Nordic and Comparative Literature at Bergen clearly benefit from a rich research environment that places them near the top of the national landscape. A good number of the projects being undertaken, and of the publications being produced, seem very impressive. That said, there is further progress to be made. In terms of both the collaborative research culture and external research income, it would seem that the institution has yet to reach the next, internationally excellent level. Attaining some ‘Centres of Excellence’ would be an important step in this direction, but it is equally important that the institution continues to support those individual researchers who do not (yet) enjoy external funding. Maintaining the commitment to the 46-46-8 model for staff – in the face of ever-growing demands on their time – would seem crucial. PhD numbers seem healthy, if not stellar and the move to encourage them to spend time abroad as part of their training is very sensible. That said, interview responses suggested the institution was not very satisfied with the quality of the PhD programme (particularly with regard to the employability of its graduates), which the panel found concerning. The two publications submitted in support of this research area are relatively strong, particularly the chapter on textual editing; the key thing now would seem to be to encourage staff to complete longer, more ambitious projects that culminate in monographs. If they are to rank at an internationally excellent level, this must be the expectation, in addition to raising the quotient of publications in English.

Feedback

Given the relatively strong and stable state of the research environment at Bergen, it would seem that the logical aspiration now must be increased ambition. A good deal of the work currently being produced, and of the projects currently being undertaken, is very impressive in national terms, but, if the departments of Nordic and Comparative Literature at Bergen are to compete internationally, and not just nationally, they must be encouraged to participate more in major collaborative projects, to seek significant external funding, and, in particular, to write substantial books and monographs. For an institution with the infrastructure and ambition of Bergen, the amount of work published at level 2 (12%) is arguably too low, which perhaps correlates with the relatively low number of monographs (as opposed to chapters and articles etc.), as well as with the places of publication (and also with the language of publication). It is striking, for instance, how few books – not just at Bergen, but throughout Norway – are published by international university presses. Greater ambition in terms of the level of both quantity (i.e. scale and kind of publication) and quality (level and place of publication) is thus strongly recommended.

Research leadership and strategic planning at faculty level need to be addressed.

University of Oslo, Faculty of Humanities (UiOHF)

The Faculty of Humanities at the University of Oslo (UiOHF) is organised in seven departments, which makes it the largest Faculty of Humanities in Norway. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of the Faculty of Humanities decreased from NOK 434.9 million (2013) to NOK 413.5 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure has also decreased from 27 % to 24 % in the same period. RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by other public Norwegian sources. Some modest EU-funding is documented in 2013 (NOK 3.3 million) but this category has decreased as well (NOK 1 million in 2015).

Within the research area of Nordic and Comparative Literature, 50 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL from the Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies (ILN), the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages (ILOS) and the Centre for Ibsen Studies (IS). The following data were submitted by the institution: two research groups (Nordic Literary Studies in Flux, and Traveling Texts: Translation and Transnational Reception), one impact case study and two research area publications. During the project, the evaluation committee interviewed representatives from the institution.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

UiO has a mix of elected and appointed officers and a clearly articulated system of coordination between levels of management. The university's 'Strategy 2020', which aims to strengthen its international position, is reinforced by annual plans; its main programme is the prioritisation of particular research areas through generous support.

In response to the national evaluation of Nordic Languages and Literature in 2005, UiO has encouraged international publications and cross-disciplinary projects and networks. The research area ILN has implemented these plans as best practice. The faculty has established international and national collaborations, some of which were developed 'bottom-up' by the researchers themselves. Given the number of researchers at UiO in Nordic and Comparative Literature, the panel was struck by the fact that only one research group was submitted. In interviews, the explanation was that they have been 'very selective'. Ideally, the panel would have liked to have seen a more representative sample.

Resources (with reference to the institution – faculty level)

UiO is awarded the lion's share of RCN's funding overall and, unsurprisingly, has well-resourced and effective research support: strategic support and seed funding are available for project and research group development, and incentives are given for top-scoring ERC applications. Strong research groups are prioritised when awarding PhD studentships. This has led to significant numbers of PhD students and post-doctoral researchers at the faculty.

The faculty integrates research and teaching well, and is aware that the focus on excellence in research draws resources away from teaching. All research staff are allocated 45% of their time for research. Funding is also available for international research collaboration (with universities in the US and SA).

Research production and quality

HF houses four impressive research sections (a-d) in the field of Nordic and Comparative Literature with strong evidence of advancement in the state of the art within particular projects: a) Old Norse

Philology has performed particularly strongly in attracting external funding for projects during the period 2007–2017. b) Ibsen studies has its international base at IS (Centre for Ibsen Studies) and is well-resourced. c) The comparative literature area has developed a number of interdisciplinary projects. d) The research group Nordic Literary Studies in Flux sees itself as being at the heart of a transformation of the field of Scandinavian literary studies, with a series of innovative projects 2008–2020, including a transhistorical project (After Honour) that spans disciplines.

HF has prioritised Ibsen Studies, ScanGuilt and Traveling Texts, based on their respective researchers' track records; the latter two projects have been awarded NOK 5 million to recruit PhDs and postdocs for 5 years (see the separate assessments of research groups by this panel and Panel 4).

Assessing the productivity and quality of the area's research is not straightforward, however. Fifty researchers are employed in the two relevant departments at UiO – 'Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies' (ILN) and 'Literature, Area Studies and European Languages' (ILOS). The following percentages relate to the total of 50:

The distribution of publication points per researcher is quite uneven. Bibliometric data indicate an average of 5.2 publication points per researcher, with 14 researchers accruing no points, while 20 gained 4 points.

Only 15% of points originate from level 2 publications (that is above the average for NCL nationally, at 13%, but below the national average of 23% for the Humanities); 49% of the points originate from journal articles and 34% from articles published in English.

While the robust self-confidence of the institution came across in the interviews, the reported research productivity does not measure up to the pre-eminence of the institution in terms of its share of funding. An aspiration to improve this was expressed in the interviews, and additional data provided post-interview revealed a higher level of productivity when non-permanent researchers were removed from the statistics (though the same may be true for other institutions as well, of course).

Recruitment and training

The faculty has a balanced workforce in terms of gender. The Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies (ILN) appears to have a rather low percentage of researchers holding a PhD (68%).

Good programmes are in place for career development and mobility. The faculty also has a policy of international recruitment.

Networking

The area's networks are nationally and internationally well-established, so that PhD candidates and postdocs are encouraged to do part of their research at a university abroad, with scholarships and financial support from UiO. The area also hosts UiO: Nordic in collaboration with other Scandinavian countries.

Impact on teaching

There is evidence of some linkage between research and teaching at BA and MA level. The faculty's PhD programme is very strong, with an average of three completions per year. Special efforts are made to promote German in education, with resources being provided by the university.

The area promotes the collaboration between researchers in Old Norse philology at UiO and researchers at the Universities of Aarhus, Copenhagen and Iceland on the master's programme in Viking and Medieval Norse Studies.

In the Student Survey, the rating for BA students' satisfaction with their knowledge of scientific work methods and research was 3.1 for Scandinavian Studies and 2.82 for the BA in Aesthetical Studies and Comparative Literature (compared with the national average of 3.0 for Panel 3 results). The rating for satisfaction with BA students' own experience of research and development work was 2.4 and 2.21, respectively (national average 3.6). At master's level, the ratings were 3.79 and 3.77 (national averages 3.4 and 3.2, respectively).

Other societal impact

There is no clear description of societal impact apart from the case study: Tone Selboe's book *Camilla Collett. Engasjerte Essays* (2013). This study on the 19th-century Norwegian woman writer Camilla Collett was nominated as the best non-fiction book in 2013 by Litteraturkritikerlaget and its publication was accompanied by immense media interest (newspapers, journals, radio, TV), which resulted in a very large number of public lectures and discussions. Selboe presents Collett as a forerunner of engaged social writing and places her essays in a European context. Through this lens, the book can be seen both as a study of the societal impact of literature and as an example of the impact of literary studies.

Overall assessment

The area is very well-resourced, and the evaluation revealed pockets of excellence in relation to research and recruitment.

Despite the remit of Panel 3 (Comparative and Nordic Literature) the focus of our assessment is limited to the research area of Nordic Literature because the given data mainly reflect the situation in the Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies (ILN) and the Centre for Ibsen Studies (IS). We understand from the interviews that this was an unbalanced presentation, since the self-assessment was apparently drafted by the Nordic Literature section.

Feedback

For a university with this level of resourcing, a higher international profile is expected in terms of publication in leading international journals and university presses. To enhance internationalisation, research findings should therefore be placed more strategically for publication.

Initiatives in other parts of the faculty to encourage students to engage in research at different levels could be adopted in this area as well.

3.3 The Arctic University of Norway UiT, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (UiTHSL)

The humanistic disciplines at UiT Arctic University of Norway (UiT) are part of a broad and multidisciplinary faculty, the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (UiTHSL). The faculty, UiT's second largest, is spread across three campuses. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of UiTHSL within the Humanities increased from NOK 136 million (2013) to NOK 140 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure decreased, however, from 18% to 13% in the same period. Within the research area of Nordic and Comparative Literature, 18 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The institution submitted one research area publication and one impact case study. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives from the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy (with reference to the institution)

The Department of Language and Culture was formed through the recent merger of Culture/Literature and Language/Linguistics. Research group leaders are in charge of intellectual strategy, but not personnel. In terms of strategy, there seems to be a particular focus, for obvious geographical reasons, on 'Arctic' identity and the indigenous Sámi population. Beyond this, the faculty has the usual, fairly generic aims (especially with regard to 'grand challenges'): more internationalisation, more completed PhDs, more publication, more innovation for research in the Humanities and thus a greater contribution to public debate.

The self-assessment document suggests an awareness of the long-term issues regarding national research infrastructure, as well as an, at times, innovative approach to different kinds of research groups. The strategic aim is to work through research communities rather than through individuals. These communities tend to be small and scattered, however.

Resources (with reference to the institution – faculty level)

Tromsø seems to have particularly strong resources in the area of Linguistics (especially Sámi). It is less clear what resources are available in Nordic and Comparative Literature. In recent years expenditure on research personnel has steadily increased, underwritten by core government funding and the RCN. While some individual researchers and communities have been successful in securing external funding, increasing the proportion remains a challenge.

Notably, Tromsø operates a differentiated model of support for research groups based on their 'life-span', i.e. 'new', 'consolidated', and 'top-level' groups. This sounds like an intriguing and enlightened idea if it means that each kind of group receives levels of support tailored to their needs.

Research production and quality

Tromsø employs a 47.5/47.5/5 model for teaching/research/administration. This suggests that staff should have plenty of time for research – and the publication statistics are indeed fairly impressive. Within the Department of Culture & Literature, 12 researchers accrued 67 publication points, 17 % at level 2 (the highest rate in the field outside of Sámi).

Enhanced interaction between Nordic and Comparative Literature might possibly lead to the work produced having greater reach. Within the area, various types of hermeneutical methods have been developed for working on literary texts as well as on literary theory. The sample publication (on

blogging about illness) is not uninteresting, but it is slight and largely self-evident. Some of the places of publication (e.g. Cambridge Scholars) are also not the most impressive.

Recruitment and training

No senior staff seem to have been hired, but five adjunct professors have been hired for the purpose of internationalisation. Measures have been taken with regard to remedying gender imbalance, resulting in more than 30% female employees in top research positions. This includes PhDs and assistant professors, however.

Only one PhD has been completed within this area in the last three years. Two new PhDs and three postdocs have been recruited in the last five years.

Networking

Given its geographical location, international collaboration is clearly important. The expectation that staff will spend sabbatical periods abroad is therefore intelligent (if arguable on both intellectual and personal grounds), as is the existence of five adjunct professor positions designed to bring international colleagues to Tromsø. It is encouraging that 'internationality' is conceived of as a two-way process.

Impact on teaching

The self-assessment document indicates that endeavours are being made to interlink teaching and research – particularly, but not exclusively, at postgraduate level – but here, as in other institutions, articulating and implementing the precise nature of this interlinking remains a challenge.

Other societal impact

The case study submitted relates to discourses of 'Arcticism'. This is an intriguing idea and relates in obvious ways to the regional remit of Tromsø in the north of Norway. The work of the research group 'Arctic Discourses' draws on a pleasingly interdisciplinary range of scholars from across literary studies (as well as from outside Tromsø), and seems to have been disseminated through a number of significant avenues (newspaper articles, a museum exhibition, encyclopaedia entries). In principle, this is therefore an impressive study that focuses on an issue with wide-ranging implications. In order to document the actual effect of its impact, however, more concrete detail would have been helpful (exhibition numbers, print runs of newspapers, subsequent responses to the group's work etc.). As it stands, it is hard to get a sense of exactly what the research by this group has changed, and assessors are thus left guessing somewhat as to the precise impact of the group's work. Claiming (in the interviews) that in 'our perception' this case study has had impact is not enough.

Overall assessment

Research within this area at Tromsø has much to commend it. The overall strategy seems intelligent, the research allocation generous, the impact case study (potentially) convincing and the publication statistics – given that it is not the largest department in the country – quietly impressive. That said, a stronger sample publication might perhaps have been submitted, since the current sample does not suggest the most incisive of intellectual environments.

Feedback

The research culture at Tromsø seems fairly impressive. The overall strategy is intelligently flexible, the research allocation generous, the impact study (potentially) convincing, and the publication statistics strong. Tromsø might perhaps work towards merging its focus on the North and the Arctic with the more international orientations of comparative literature; in this way it could profit from

both worlds. Quite aside from any local benefits within the department at Tromsø, this might also help to create a broader profile and audience for the work published (i.e. beyond the inevitably narrower world of Nordic Literature).

The challenge of attracting external funding remains: more international collaborations focused on applications for joint projects might be pursued, perhaps supported by hiring organisational expertise.

3.4 University of Agder (UiA)

The Faculty of Humanities at the University of Agder (UiA) has four departments under which all study programmes are organised. According to the institutional self-assessment, UiA's total expenditure has decreased from NOK 38.6 million (2013) to NOK 32.9 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure has increased, however, from 7.4% to 12.2% in the same period. RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by private Norwegian sources. Moreover, a small share of the external funding comes from other public Norwegian sources (NOK 3.5 million from 2013–2015).

Within the research area of Nordic and Comparative Literature, UiA listed 14 researchers for HUMEVAL. The institution submitted one research area publication but no impact case studies. During the project, the evaluation committee interviewed representatives from the institution.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The leadership model is focused on the dean as 'top leader'; it is unclear how effective this top-down model is in terms of inspiring high-quality research. External research funding appears to be decreasing.

Publication strategies, focus areas for research and national and international research collaboration that is likely to facilitate high scientific quality in the future are not directly addressed in the area's self-assessment, but these might emerge in the institution's upcoming strategic planning process. Responses during interviews indicate that the institution is managing a complex situation thoughtfully, given that most of its income is derived from teaching provision.

Annual appraisals of researchers by heads of department are already in place and could help to foster the development of the area's research culture. The division of researchers into workable 'research units' that may develop into research groups seems a sensible arrangement, but more information on how these have been developed and what effect 'strategic funds' have had on the development of research would be helpful.

The MULTIKUL project (2010–13) appears to have been successful in terms of outputs (boosted by the efforts of Professor IIs.). Interview responses indicate that this project has now been terminated. It is not clear how the area will respond to the impetus (described in relation to the national evaluation of History) to move away from national perspectives and localism.

Resources

As the RCN report notes, Agder still has 'a funding base which is more similar to regional state university colleges' with a 'very small' proportion of national research funding going to it and similar institutions. (The RCN report Figure 9 shows that funding has in fact declined from a relatively very low base to the barely visible.) NCL at UiA clearly use their limited resources effectively. UiA will be inhibited from becoming a top research institution if insufficient funding is available to maintain the University Library.

There is awareness of the need to integrate teaching and research better. More resources will be necessary, however, to relieve researchers of heavy teaching loads to allow them to fulfil their research potential. Even after the interviews, it is not exactly clear how much time is allocated to research and what the mechanism is for determining this.

More support for preparing grant applications for external funding (beyond the establishment of a mentor group) might increase the success rate. Support is also needed for individual research projects and for larger research groups.

The allocation of financial support rests with the head of department; it is not clear whether the level is adequate or how effective the allocation of 'extra research time' (2.1.b) has been.

Research production and quality

NCL at UiA has a very good publication rate, with 14 researchers amassing 70 publication points. All staff have accrued some points, with 43% having '4 pub./pub. points' (an average of 5 points per researcher, above the national average for NCL of 4.34). Of the points, 13% are from level 2 publications (which corresponds to the national average for NCL), with 18% in English and 25% published in journals.

A broad range of areas is covered within NCL across historical periods, with a preponderance in the post-1960 period, including participation in the UiA research group 'Trauma Fictions in Contemporary Culture'. It seems a curious decision that the only publication submitted dates from 2006, with only passing mention of it in the self-assessment document. It nonetheless represents research of very high quality, situating Ibsen's *A Doll's House* within the context of legislative and social debates about women's property rights.

The PhD programme is small but could be developed.

Recruitment and training

Only 36% of researchers in permanent posts hold PhDs, well below the figure for UiA overall (52%) and the national average for NCL (73%). There are no postdocs and no cogent plans to encourage them (beyond the possibility that projects in linguistics might recruit them). In terms of career paths, it is not clear how junior academic staff are mentored (beyond an annual appraisal). The fact that recruitment appears to be based solely on teaching needs would seem to complicate the development of a coherent research strategy, and it inhibits development from a regional college profile to a university profile. National and international mobility for researchers is not directly addressed, though it is clearly desirable. The answers during interviews suggest that mobility and internationalisation are conceived of more in terms of students than staff. More resources will be needed to enable mobility for staff.

Networking

More should be done to encourage PhD students and postdocs to spend more time abroad and in other Norwegian institutions. Mention is made of the institution's involvement in national and Nordic projects in the past (2.2.a).

Impact on teaching

There is awareness of the value of dissertation work in relation to optimising the interplay between teaching and research, but this is still currently under development. 'Societal relevance' is repeatedly flagged as an important issue for research at Agder. This is laudable, but should not be allowed to distract from the disinterested pursuit of research aims.

Other societal impact

The number of popular science lectures appears to have increased dramatically during the MULTIKUL project.

Overall assessment

The area is very effective given the limited resources allocated to it. More resources are needed to maintain and increase the research productivity of researchers working on individual projects as well as of those in the priority area.

A better balance needs to be achieved between teaching and research if research performance is to be lifted; more funding will be necessary to achieve this, to provide teaching relief for those with viable research projects. A more international outlook, particularly at the level of PhDs and postdocs, could also be of significant benefit.

Feedback

An impressive amount is currently being achieved at Agder with fairly limited resources. The key needs would now seem to be: 1) greater internationality, and 2) more sustained investment, both in the research time of existing staff and, where possible, in new staff.

3.5 Hedmark University of Applied Sciences (HiHm)

Established in 1994, the Faculty of Education and Natural Sciences (LUNA) at Hedmark University of Applied Sciences (HiHm) is organised in four departments (Dept. of Humanities, Dept. of Social Sciences, Dept. of Fine Arts & Computer Science and Dept. of Natural Sciences & Technology). According to the institutional self-assessment, LUNA's total expenditure increased from NOK 15.5 million (2013) to NOK 19.5 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure has also increased from 7.1% to 11.8% in the same period. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by international public sources.

Within the research area of Nordic and Comparative Literature, seven researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: one research group (Scandinavian Poetry), one impact case study. During the project, the evaluation committee interviewed representatives from the institution.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

Hedmark University of Applied Sciences (HiHm) has a Department of Humanities in the Faculty of Education and Natural Sciences (LUNA). The plan to merge with Lillehammer University College has now been confirmed and will entail a significant period of transition for the institution. The main strategic aim of HiHm is to obtain university status. HiHm's strategic research aims are governed by the (commendable if somewhat diffuse) values of closeness, quality and responsibility. Responses during interviews suggest a willingness to engage constructively with the assessment process, and they also indicated positive developments in relation to research groups. An educational aim is to improve local and regional competence through teacher education. A government policy to extend teacher education to MA level and to make Norwegian language and literature a core discipline in teacher education has resulted in HiHm continuing to prioritise NCL.

Resources (with reference to the institution – faculty level)

The quotient of RCN Humanities funding is too small to be disaggregated from the 'Other HE institutions' category in the RCN report. As is the case with other similar institutions, the library is stated to be the most important part of the research infrastructure. Professors have 50% of their time for research and associate professors 35%, while extra support is available through a competitive internal process. There is no formal policy of sabbatical research leave, although researchers can concentrate their teaching in one or the other semester. The research effort is afforded some stability through institutional funding, but the fact remains that HiHm is one of the institutions for higher education in Norway that receives the lowest level of financing. There are no postdoc positions. Of eight researchers in NCL, one is a professor, three are associate professors and four are PhD students, while six researchers are members of the Scandinavian Poetry research group (SP).

Research production and quality

The 50 'points' achieved effectively by just six researchers (1 of 7 has no points) makes for an average 7.1, which is well above the national average of 4.2 for NCL. Of the publications, 24% are in journals and 15% in English. The hierarchical model of allocating research time may not adequately support early career researchers. One researcher is clearly an expert on modern American literature, but has produced very little on Scandinavian literature. Another researcher is an expert on 'Finnskoglitteratur'. The rest of the researchers have mainly published on Norwegian poetry and the

poetry of the region. There is no evident integration between these highly different research areas. Research of high quality has been produced as a result of the efforts of individual researchers. Apart from the publications on American literature, the places of publication tend not to be of international standing. This can in part be explained by the nature of the research (on Norwegian authors who are not known internationally). The members of the Scandinavian Poetry group presented publications of high quality (see the assessment of the research group).

Recruitment and training

A mentor programme is being established. Annual career development meetings are held between the Head of Department and individual researchers. There is a good research environment for PhD students and they are integrated into ongoing research activities. This can only be acclaimed. However, the quite narrow research profile is a potential problem as regards general recruitment. Only one PhD graduate has been produced in the period 2013–15. Responses in interviews suggested that it is sometimes a challenge to encourage long-term employees to complete PhDs.

Networking

Collaboration at the level of research groups (SP) and projects (seminars and similar) with researchers at Aalborg University in Denmark goes both ways. Apart from this collaboration there is no indication of a strong international – or even Scandinavian – research network (although HiHm does have a programme of collaboration with Sweden, Namibia and Zambia). PhD students are encouraged (and funded) to spend time abroad.

Impact on teaching

MA students do independent research for a thesis and there is some possibility for this at BA level too. Both teaching education programmes are regulated by national curricula. This is viewed as a challenge. A strong link between research and teaching is not described. The strongest link might well be in the domain of children's and young adults' literature since the teaching takes place in teaching education programmes that primarily relate to preschool and primary and secondary school. However, the study of poetry in the context of intermediality can also be of great relevance to the teaching of NCL in such teaching programmes. In the Student Survey, the rating for students' satisfaction with their knowledge of scientific work methods and research ranged from 2.89 to 3.62 across BA programmes, compared with the national average for Panel 3 results of 3.0. The range for satisfaction with their own experience of research and development work was 2.48 to 3.08 (national average 3.6)

Other societal impact

Researchers are devoting much work to the cultural transmission of local, regional and Scandinavian authors, especially poets, and are involved in literary events in the local and regional community. The societal impact case presented in HiHm's self-assessment is the research project 'Prøysen 2014', which is about the local author Alf Prøysen. The aim is to make Prøysen more recognised all over Norway. The project has resulted in symposia, anthologies and a number of other publications. Resources have thus been produced that will hopefully enable Prøysen to be included more in curricula at various levels of the educational system in Norway. A project of this kind and the general involvement in local and regional literary events is impressive. An institution like HiHm can achieve a much more effective societal impact in ways like this than by claiming to address 'grand challenges'.

Overall assessment

Research productivity is very impressive, particularly given such small numbers of staff involved, but more level 2 publications could perhaps be produced (only 6% at present). Judging from publications, research interests are mainly oriented towards Norwegian literature and poetry, with a lot of attention being devoted to local and regional authors. This makes the overall research profile narrow. International collaboration does take place, but it primarily involves researchers from Aalborg University in Denmark. It is praiseworthy that this collaboration takes place, however, and jointly organised seminars and similar give the members of SP a possibility to further enhance their network.

Feedback

In order to further develop research, we recommend a wider research profile, more internal integration, a more proactive strategy as regards places of publication, and a stronger international network (for example, SP would better fit its name if it included Swedish researchers). This would be desirable if literary research at HiHm is to contribute significantly towards the ambition of achieving university status, an aim that will probably require more personnel and hence more funding. From the perspective of our panel assessment, the step from being a local institution involved in teacher training to becoming a full university does seem to be considerable in spite of the commendable efforts to date to work towards it.

3.6 Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HiOA)

The Faculty of Social Sciences (SAM) at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences is organised in five departments (Archivistics, Library and Information Sciences (ABI), Journalism and Media Studies (IJM), Public Management, Social Work, Child Welfare & Social Policy, and Oslo Business School). According to the institutional self-assessment, SAM's total expenditure has increased from NOK 179.5 million (2013) to NOK 209.7 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure has decreased, however, from 8.4% to 6.9% in the same period. RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by other public Norwegian sources.

Within the research area of Nordic and Comparative Literature, ten researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The institution submitted one impact case study but no research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives from the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

One of four faculties, the Faculty of Social Sciences, consists of five departments. The heads of department have scientific and financial responsibility and oversee programme managers, research group leaders and administrative staff. Strategic objectives have been set for the period 2013-2020 and research groups established, including LITKULT. An external panel reviewed the research group structure in 2016 and recommended organisational changes that are being implemented. They included strengthening research areas that can make a national and international difference, and embedding research in national and international networks. The aim is also to improve the rate and quality of scientific publications. Support for internationalisation is provided at the institutional level. The group structure was evaluated as effective in 2016, though groups need to develop more clearly defined goals.

It is noted in the self-assessment that the institution's focus on teaching and nursing may 'marginalise' librarianship.

Resources

RCN funding is at too low a level to be disaggregated in the RCN report (Figure 9). HiOA perceives a threat to the 'applied science' sector from the trend towards prioritising elite institutions (SWOT).

HiOA's library seems to be well-resourced and effective, supporting PhD students and participating in national and international library loan networks.

While the allocation of 45% of time for research at professorial level is reasonable, the increased teaching load at assistant professor and associate professor level (65% teaching and 25% research, and 55% teaching and 35% research, respectively) could inhibit the development of research profiles for early-career researchers.

The absence of research/sabbatical leave for tenured staff is a serious weakness if the area is to develop its research culture. There is limited internal funding for internationalisation (through joining COST actions, for instance).

Research production and quality

Bibliometric data indicate that 10 researchers amass only 24 'points'; 2 researchers accrued no points, but 5 had '4 pub./pub. points'. (This results in an average of 2.4 points per researcher, well below the national average for Nordic Literature of 4.34.) If PhD students are taken out of the equation, the publication average of professors rises to 6, which is impressive in this context. Only 2% of points accrue from level 2 publications, however, and only 6% are in English, while 16% are in journals.

On the other hand, the case study is impressive. The research group is clearly at the cutting edge of this kind of research in the Nordic area and is well-connected in national and international networks. The research is visibly embedded in national and international networks.

Recruitment and training

Among the permanent staff there were one professor and three associate professors at the time of reporting, with the remaining six researchers holding 'recruitment positions', suggesting organisational fragility unless there is a steady stream of 'recruitment' or lectureships are established.

The research group has had one postdoctoral fellow, funded by the institution. It is unclear whether there is the potential for another.

Four out of five researchers hold PhD degrees. There is a focus on gender equality, as well as on countering discrimination on the grounds of disability and ethnic minority status.

Networking

Research is well-embedded within national and international networks, but there is no funding for longer stays abroad, and not all PhDs can receive funding for a stay abroad.

Impact on teaching

The research group contributes to the teaching of the BA, MA and PhD in Librarianship and there appears to be very good integration of teaching and research, with strong administrative support. The research groups have evolved out of teaching areas, and the group's publications are on the syllabus.

There are opportunities for students to become involved in research activities from the third year of their BA onwards. The challenge at BA level is that education is geared towards the professions rather than to preparing students for a research career.

In the Student Survey, the rating for BA students' satisfaction with their knowledge of scientific work methods and research was 2.96, compared with the national average for Panel 3 results of 3.0. The rating for satisfaction with their own experience of research and development work was 2.54 (national average 3.6)

Other societal impact

Research is focused on libraries, librarians, the book market and the promotion of books and, accordingly, has obvious societal relevance. The case study, on the sociology and promotion of literature, consists of three strands: the promotional practices of librarians, interaction between the media and the book market, and the development of the sociology of literature in Scandinavia. The case rests on theoretically grounded work on the reading habits and recommendations of librarians, and the innovative projects that have subsequently followed on from this in relation to children's

literature and best-sellers. While much of the impact is within the academic community (especially the pioneering work on the sociology of literature), it extends beyond it to the professional sphere of librarianship and is increasingly manifested in the broader community through invitations to members of the research group to participate in public discussions and to be members of prize panels, for example.

Overall assessment

The research area is a distinguished one, straddling the borders between book history, comparative literature, information science and library science. This area deserves to be further developed through more possibilities for funding, as it is of the highest relevance internationally (topics such as the industrial revolution of the book, children's libraries, e-reading and online fan cultures contribute to state-of-the art research).

Such a niche research unit needs strategic support (through the establishment of lectureships or a continuing stream of postdocs and PhD students) in order to be sustainable.

Feedback

There is a strong research potential in the area, with proven records of high-quality research, as the case study on comparative literature within library and information science indicates. The researchers have successfully created a niche position through this line of research. Some theoretical perspectives may perhaps be somewhat dated (cf. Mukarovsky combined with Bakhtin) and could be updated.

A significant challenge is the integration of research and teaching at the BA level to create opportunities to develop a research programme that incorporates a professional focus.

3.7 Telemark University College (University College of Southeast Norway) (HiT)

In 2016, Telemark University College (HiT) merged with Buskerud and Vestfold University College (HBV) to become the University College of Southeast Norway (USN). For HUMEVAL, however, HiT is the relevant institution for the evaluation. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences (AT) was organised in four departments, where the majority of the researchers in the Humanities belonged to the Department of Cultural Studies and Humanities (IKH). According to the institutional self-assessment HiT's total expenditure increased from NOK 6.9 million (2013) to NOK 11.9 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure has also increased from 4.6% to 8.8% in the same period. The external funding comes from Norwegian sources only. RCN is not listed as a funding source, however.

Within the research area of Nordic and Comparative Literature, six researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The institution did not submit any research area publications and no impact case studies. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives from the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The leadership model at Telemark seems to be somewhat unclear (it is described as 'unitary'), although heads of departments are apparently the 'prime research leaders'. There does not seem to be a very concrete research strategy, despite the professed aims. The focus at this point seems to be almost entirely on becoming a university (with the PhD programme seen as instrumental in achieving this ambition). This new institution hopes to be 'close to public sectors' and to provide, through the merger, 'increased R&D time'. It is not clear, however, what the specific strategy will be for the development of research in Nordic Literature in the new institution.

Resources

The self-assessment document emphasises the well-stocked library at Telemark, but not a lot else. There seems to be little research-led teaching, while the quotient of RCN Humanities funding is too small to be disaggregated from the 'Other HE institutions' category in the RCN report. That said, research income – particularly from 'external Norwegian sources' – seems to be on an upward trajectory (Table 1). One of the principal problems at Telemark is that researchers' teaching load is very high: a 20/60/20 model leaves little time for research. This will have to change if the institution aspires to the status of a research university. There is at least provision for strategic funding for sabbatical leave and support for writing grant applications, although it is not clear how successful this has been. (A SWOT analysis seems to suggest an organisational disincentive to granting sabbatical leave because of the impact on teaching arrangements.)

Research production and quality

There are only six researchers in Nordic and Comparative Literature at Telemark, amassing a total of 16 publication points. This results in an average of 2.7 points, well below the NCL national average of 4.2. Of these points, 10% are at level 2, with 50% in journals and 20% in English. Given these numbers, it is too early for the formation of meaningful research groups (the merger sensibly aspires to critical mass). The high teaching load is currently making it difficult for researchers not only to take on big projects but also to complete them. In interviews, an aspiration was expressed of increasing the number of publication points, but the panel felt there was no reason why researchers should not also aim to publish their work in leading international journals.

Recruitment and training

All of the six submitted researchers are professors (100%, compared with 33% for TUC overall), while only four hold a PhD. Ideally, one would like to see a greater range of levels – including, in particular, more junior colleagues – in order to ensure future development through recruitment positions. The ratio of men to women is 2:1, and the gender balance (here as elsewhere) is poor at upper levels: only 21% of professors are female and 28% of associate professors. It is unclear how successful the dialogue between heads of departments and researchers is in supporting ambitions to become professors. Meanwhile a PhD programme has just been inaugurated although there are no completed PhDs as yet.

Networking

There is currently not much evidence of international networks, despite the existence of an international committee and a commitment to international projects and cooperation. Indeed, there seems to be very little evidence of research networks in general (beyond the current merger), despite the recognition that international experience is valuable for researchers as well as for PhD students. In short, there is an evident need for internationalisation.

Impact on teaching

No particular link is indicated.

Other societal impact

None claimed, although creative writing has a presence (particularly through the Bøker i Bø festival).

Overall assessment

In our view, it is too early to give any meaningful assessment of the research culture in Telemark. Currently, there are too few colleagues working there within the field of literary studies, and those who are do not have enough time for their research (only 20%). The low publication output in terms of points (average 2.7) is presumably linked to this.

Feedback

If the University College of Telemark is to fulfil its ambition of becoming a research-intensive university, there needs to be a step-change: it is imperative that more time (and thus more money) is assigned to research; 20% of staff time for research is not enough. The aim should presumably be to reproduce the model used by established institutions (i.e. 45/45/10). As it undergoes the current merger, the institution should give serious thought to the extent to which research will be at the heart of its endeavours. Resources will then have to be assigned accordingly. It may be helpful to look to develop a few specialist areas of research ('niches'), rather than trying to play catch-up with older and bigger institutions.

4 Assessment of research groups

4.1 UiBHF - History, Rhetoric, and Reception of Literature

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The research group History, Rhetoric and Reception of Literature at Bergen has a clear focus on the history of literary criticism and literary scholarship in Norway. The group leader sets a high standard through his own practice and perspective on literary theory. The central strategy of the department and faculty has so far been to strengthen individual research. Accordingly, the research group's organisation contributes to the overarching aims of the institution. However, the loose organisation and the lack of additional resources do not match the ambition of applying for the status of a centre of excellence or for major external funding.

Research production and quality

Most of the senior members, including the group leader, have published at a high level, both articles and comprehensive monographs. A number of junior researchers have a more limited output but at a level appropriate to the stage of their careers. The publications are predominantly in Norwegian, which can to some extent be justified because the subject is Norwegian literature. The ambitious methodological approach that is promoted in the self-evaluation is not apparent in the submitted works, however.

Recruitment and training

There is no description of a systematic approach to recruitment and training beyond the generic description of a minimal approach to this aspect.

Networking

The descriptions of the research group's network activities are sketchy and do not suggest any systematic participation in or organisation of conferences. However, good arguments are made about the impact of some of the group members' work and their participation in public debate.

Impact on teaching

The core subject of the group aligns well with the subjects taught, but there are no examples of it having actively engaged in developing new courses or of endeavours being made to introduce students to the latest research.

Overall assessment

The organisation of the group is very loose. While the output of individual researchers has been strong, it is unclear how important the group has been in achieving these results. The stated

ambition of applying for a large, externally-funded project does not seem realistic given the weak track record of organising a small collective project and the modest international impact to date.

Feedback

The group should systematically review its activities and define a clearer path to achieve the goal of a new approach to contextual studies of literature. The low score on teaching, recruitment and networking reflects areas that could be improved through concerted attention.

4.2 UiOHF – Nordic Literary Studies in Flux

Overall score: 5

Research production and quality: 5

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The research group Nordic Literary Studies in Flux at Oslo was formed in response to the critical points made in the assessment 'Nordic languages and literature', which RCN conducted in 2005. Its declared aim is to develop Nordic Literature Studies in a global, multicultural, cosmopolitan context. The main focus of its three projects is on the role of literature and fiction in cultural self-reflection and the negotiation of societal challenges. This corresponds to the strategic aims of both the Faculty of Humanities (as one of three prioritised initiatives) and the University of Oslo (UiO: Nordic). Accordingly, the group has described the administrative and financial support provided by the institutions as positive. The acquisition of external funding from the RCN was correspondingly successful and the group has recently been working on applications for ERC Advanced Grants.

The six core members are led by Elisabeth Oxfeldt as cooperative leader. The self-assessment does not give any insight into the details of this cooperation (e.g. regular meetings, joint policy discussions etc.).

Research production and quality

In accordance with the resources provided by the university, the core members' output in the form of conference papers and academic and popular publications is very high. The quality of the core members' research in Scandinavian Literature is at a very high level and reflects the latest research topics and methods in Literary Studies. Scandinavian, English and German research is taken into account. The group publishes in internationally renowned academic journals and books; the choice of language depends on the topic, target group and the guidelines of particular publishers.

Recruitment and training

The group's self-assessment lists four PhD candidates and one postdoctoral researcher. In the course of 2016, another five PhD candidates and postdoctoral fellows have joined. All positions were advertised internationally. The PhD candidates are encouraged to conduct part of their research at a university abroad, with scholarships and financial support from UiO. The six core members can be considered experienced supervisors since they are currently supervising 13 PhD candidates and have successfully supervised a further 12 PhDs during the course of their academic careers.

Networking

At all career levels (PhD candidates, postdocs, tenured staff) and in all sub-projects, the research group has established very good links, both interdisciplinarily (within the Humanities, to Theology, and to Social Sciences), and internationally (with Denmark, England, Germany, Iceland, Sweden, the US).

Impact on teaching

The work of the research group informs education at BA level, but most significantly flows into master's education (approx. one course per year). The experience from academic classes flows back into the research. Through teacher education programmes, the research impacts primary and secondary school education.

Overall assessment

The three rather divergent research projects have in common a cosmopolitan understanding of national philologies. The group's particular strength is the freedom granted to individual researchers to pursue their research within the group's broad theoretical frame.

The faculty and the RCN provide extensive funds for permanent employees and their research, and for the education of PhD candidates. The group profits greatly from international networking. It produces highly relevant research at an international level and makes use of internationally renowned publication channels.

4.3 HiHm Scandinavian Poetry

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The research group Scandinavian Poetry at HiHm is focused on lyric poetry, especially modern and contemporary lyric poetry in Scandinavia. Several of the group's senior members have published extensively in this area. Six members of the group are from Hedmark University of Applied Sciences in Norway, two are from Denmark (Aalborg University) and one is from Switzerland (Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg). In Norway and Denmark, the group's members and various activities relating to the group are well supported by the two home institutions. Members have also successfully applied for external funding. Overall, the organisation of the group appears to be quite loose. When members from Norway and Denmark work together, it is mostly in forums other than the group itself. The group does not have a clearly formulated research strategy. Nonetheless, several members of the group from Norway and Denmark share an interest in seeing contemporary poetry move away from the medium of the book.

Research production and quality

Several members of the group are experts in the field of modern Scandinavian poetry and have published extensively on this subject through both monographs and articles. It can therefore be said that state of the art research has been carried out by several members of the group. However, one member who is an expert on Raymond Carver's works, including his poetry, has published almost nothing on Scandinavian poetry. Most of the work on Scandinavian poetry has been published in

Norwegian and Danish, which can be justified since Scandinavian languages are the dominant medium for research on Scandinavian lyric poetry. The Danish senior members of the group appear to be the most pan-Scandinavian in their research interests and are producing work of outstanding quality. The submitted works do not justify the claim that the group as a whole contributes to the development of new interdisciplinary methods for reading contemporary poetry. The published work does not appear to be a coordinated effort, but rather a collection of individual efforts.

Recruitment and training

The senior researchers are currently all supervising PhD students. Applications for external funding always include positions for PhD students. However, there is no description of a systematic approach to recruitment and training by the group as a whole.

Networking

The composition of the group is in itself an international network. The Swiss member appears to be somewhat on the periphery, however. Individually, most of the senior members have solid international networks and participate regularly in international conferences. Yet the group as a unit has so far not organised any international conferences.

Impact on teaching

The senior researchers in the group are all teaching full-time at present and regularly teach at BA and MA level. One of the core interests of the group – in seeing poetry move to media other than that of the book – is very well-suited to courses at these levels. But there is no information about courses that have been designed specifically to fit the activities of the group as a whole.

Overall assessment

The group does not come across as a strong unit with stable channels of funding, a clearly defined research strategy or solid strategies for recruitment and training. However, given the resources that are available at the institution, the group deserves praise for bringing a well-defined focus to its research and building a transnational network.

Feedback

It seems unlikely that the group, in its present state, will be able to contribute significantly to HiHm's goal of achieving full university status. In order to do this, the group would both have to expand (for example by including members from Sweden in order to cover the three Scandinavian countries) and to become a much tighter unit with a clearly defined strategy. As it stands, the senior researchers at Hedmark will contribute to this goal as individual researchers who work together in various contexts rather than through the group as such.

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6 List of abbreviations used in the reports

Abbreviation	Meaning
ABI	Archivistics, Library and Information Services (HiOA)
AHO	Oslo School of Architecture and Design
AT	Faculty of Arts and Sciences (HiT)
ATH	Ansgar University College and Theological Seminary
BI	BI Norwegian Business School
BVH	Buskerud and Vestfold University College
CL	Comparative Literature
COST	European Cooperation in Science and Technology (international funding programme)
CRISTin	Current Research Information System in Norway
DHS	Diakonhjemmet University College
FIH	Fjellhaug International University College
FP	EU Framework Programme
FRIPRO	RCN's 'bottom-up' funding instrument for investigator-initiated research
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HERD	Higher Education Expenditure on R&D
HiHm	Hedmark University College
HiL	Lillehammer University College
HiØ	Østfold University College
HiOA	Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences
HiT /TUC	Telemark University College
HUMEVAL	This evaluation of the Humanities in Norway
HVO	Volda University College
IFS	Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies
IJM	Journalism and Media Studies (HiOA)
IKH	Department of Cultural Studies and Humanities (HiOA)
ILN	Dept. of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies (UiO)
ILOS	Dept. of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages (UiO)
IS	Centre for Ibsen Studies (UiO)

LUNA	Faculty of Education and Natural Sciences (HiHm)
MF	Norwegian School of Theology
MHS	School of Mission and Theology
NCL	Nordic and Comparative Literature
NHH	Norwegian School of Economics
NIFU	Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education
NIKU	Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research
NL	Nordic Literature
NLA	NLA University College
NMH	Norwegian Academy of Music
NOKUT	The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
NTNU	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
NTNUHF	Norwegian University of Science and Technology Faculty of humanities
NTNUMuseum	Norwegian University of Science and Technology University Museum
PRIO	Peace Research Institute, Oslo
RCN	Research Council of Norway
REF	UK Research Excellence Framework (a system for performance-based research funding)
SAM	Faculty of Social Sciences (HiOA)
SH/SAMAS	Sámi University of Applied Sciences
SP	Scandinavian Poetry (HiHm research group)
UHR	Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions
UiA	University of Agder
UiB	University of Bergen
UiBHF	University of Bergen Faculty of Humanities
UiBMuseum	University of Bergen University Museum
UiBSV	University of Bergen Faculty of Social Sciences
UiN	Nordland University
UiO	University of Oslo
UiOHF	University of Oslo Faculty of Humanities
UiOMuseum/KHM	University of Oslo Museum of Cultural History
UiOTF	University of Oslo Faculty of Theology
UiS	University of Stavanger

UiSMuseum	University of Stavanger Museum of Archaeology
UiT	The Arctic University of Norway
UiTHSL	The Arctic University of Norway, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education
UiTmuseum	The Arctic University of Norway University Museum
UNI	UNI Research (In the case of this evaluation specifically the UNI Research Rokkan Centre)
WoS	Thomson-Reuters Web of Science

7 List of panel members

Chair from 10/2016	Quinn	Judy	University of Cambridge
Chair to 09/2016	Brillenbug-Wurth	Kiene	University of Utrecht
Secretary	van de Ven	Inge	University of Leiden
	Bøggild	Jacob	University of Southern Denmark
	Hutchinson	Ben	University of Kent
	Rosendahl Thomsen	Mads	University of Aarhus
	Schiedermaier	Joachim	University of Greifswald



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