

Evaluation of the Humanities in Norway

Report from Panel 8 – Media Studies

Evaluation
Division for Science



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Summary

The panel was positively impressed by the plurality and variety of the Norwegian units engaging in Media and Communication research, some of which were more specialised and some more generalised. In principle, the panel considered plurality to be a positive factor: a variety of research environments is certainly better than a monoculture. However, the diversity also raised some concerns within the panel, most notably that excessive plurality could potentially lead to fragmentation and weak research output. A coordinated research focus and allocation of resources at the national level, as well as further specialisation of research organisations are measures that might prevent excessive plurality of research and fragmentation. These remarks concern institutions at all levels, both the leading universities and university colleges.

Overall, the panel considered the quality of Norway's Media and Communication research to be of a good international standard. While it is a relatively small academic culture, the quality of publications fares quite well in relation to international standards, indicating a strong potential to attract higher levels of international funding. Despite this overall strength, none of the evaluated institutions gave the impression of outstanding excellence, i.e. of being a leading international organisation that professionals would look up to within the area of scholarship.

Within this general picture, the panel noted significant differences between the evaluated institutions. The panel's impression is that there is, in effect, a three-tier national hierarchy, in which the research area seems to be dominated by two top universities, followed by a small number of middle-level organisations, mainly smaller universities and university colleges. The institutions' position in this hierarchy does not, however, reflect research productivity and quality. Some middle-level institutions made a strong impression by demonstrating a high production rate and quality without extensive resources. Nevertheless, there are a few institutions with limited resources at the bottom of the scale whose contribution to research remains weak. Apart from their lack of original research output, the scarcity of resources in some of these smaller institutions might considerably hamper their ability to fully support the development of research students and staff.

The performance of the institutions seems to vary greatly. The panel was not able to pinpoint specific research areas that stand out as exceptional in an international comparison. However, there appear to be several pockets of promising research in various areas. Research on media innovation is a particularly interesting field with the capacity to produce original and, indeed, innovative output. In addition, the field of Film Studies appears to produce some original research of interest to international audiences. Climate communication is another field that produces strong though not particularly innovative, international output.

The main weaknesses of the research field relate to what the panel could best describe as a degree of complacency. This attitude could be due to the relative generosity of and ease of access to funding from national funding sources. A number of the evaluated institutions do not seem to actively endeavour to access new sources of funding. This is particularly apparent in the lack of concrete measures to attract European funding, despite interest often being expressed.

A related weakness is the overall insularity of the national field. Participating institutions only demonstrated limited international research cooperation and recruitment of international researchers. Most notably, there appears to be no common policy on international recruitment.

A significant area for improvement in Norwegian Media and Communication studies concerns international and national research cooperation. Researchers and research groups do not appear to be actively encouraged and given support to seek cross-disciplinary collaboration.

There is a degree of conservatism in Norwegian Media and Communication research. Aside from the area of media innovation, much of the research seems to be stuck in the traditional field of legacy media. This sometimes gave the impression that the changes that have taken place in the media environment over the past 20 years did not happen.

The relatively secure and long-term forms of funding benefit research and education, allowing the staff to concentrate on their actual tasks rather than spending an excessive amount of time on preparing new applications. It appears, however, that the availability of adequate and secure sources of funding from national funding streams does little to incentivise departments to enter the competition for international funding. Agencies appear to fund a variety of issues and topics within the research area, which produces welcome plurality and diversity. At the same time, there seems to be a relative lack of funding for large-scale and long-term projects that could develop internationally visible research. Overall, good research leadership and management practices appear to be in place.

The panel was positively impressed by the resources and structural support for doctoral training. Overall, there seems to be adequate resources for staff training. The panel was particularly impressed by the way many institutions integrate professional practitioners from the field of Media and Communication, and support them in their pursuit of PhDs. Good practices seem to be in place for supporting the integration of late-entry practitioners in the institutions. This is a welcome practice, since practitioners tend to be up-to-date with the ongoing changes in media professions and have good relations with the industry. The Norwegian model of recruiting practitioners to teach while supporting their academic development is highly commendable. There is considerable variation in the gender balance of staff at different levels of the institutional hierarchy.

Overall, there seems to be a lack of a general strategy when it comes to research cooperation with other sectors of society, with collaboration mainly taking place through individual initiatives.

Recommendations

Given the healthy diversity of the research area and its institutional structure, the panel recommends that the government and major funding bodies continue to ensure that Media and Communication Studies can be researched and taught at a variety of institutions. This means that, while allocating resources to a few large institutions can help them achieve excellence at the international level, other units should also be supported in future. The very small institutions at the bottom of the hierarchy have few resources with which to make a meaningful contribution to research, and they might need to reconsider whether or not they should continue with Media Studies, or whether it would be more advisable to pool their research and teaching resources. However, as long as they continue to teach Media and Communication, the panel encourages them to also engage with research in order to keep up with international developments in this area.

The panel encourages Norwegian institutions to become more competitive in applying for European funding. This applies in particular to the larger universities. National funding instruments could be further developed to increasingly encourage, foster and incentivise international exchange and collaboration.

The panel encourages institutions within the field to collaborate more with each other. Especially the two dominating universities could benefit from greater collaboration. A 'virtual university' that connects researchers on specific subjects – for instance journalism research – would be one concrete form of such collaboration.

The panel would like to see Media Studies researchers increasingly getting together with people from other disciplines. Institutions and funding instruments should increasingly incentivise the development of structures and practices based on cross-unit and interdisciplinary collaboration. Universities, specifically, can do more to encourage interdisciplinary research by, for instance, funding interdisciplinary research groups.

The panel recommends developing national-level initiatives that foster research collaboration between industry and research.

The panel encourages research groups to develop a stronger vision. The formation and development of research groups could be encouraged by a new funding instrument. This could support a specific research group for a specific period, for example five years, and then consider whether to continue the funding (if such a policy is not already in place).

Good practices seem to be in place for supporting the recruitment of late-entry practitioners to research and higher education institutions. The panel would like to see more structural support for these practices. The authorities might consider developing a national system for training practitioners as academics.

The panel recommends that, in order to better address gender balance issues, the institutions reflect more on why gender imbalance persists and what they can do to improve the situation. In addition, we encourage institutions to pay more attention to other diversity and equality factors.

The panel encourages institutions to continue to reflect on how they could have a greater societal impact. Academia's function is to provide a critical perspective on social conditions and change, and this critique should be seen as a form of societal impact in itself. However, as the critical impact of research depends on its ability to develop new knowledge, we would like to encourage institutions to reflect on how they can contribute to the theoretical development of the research area.

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.

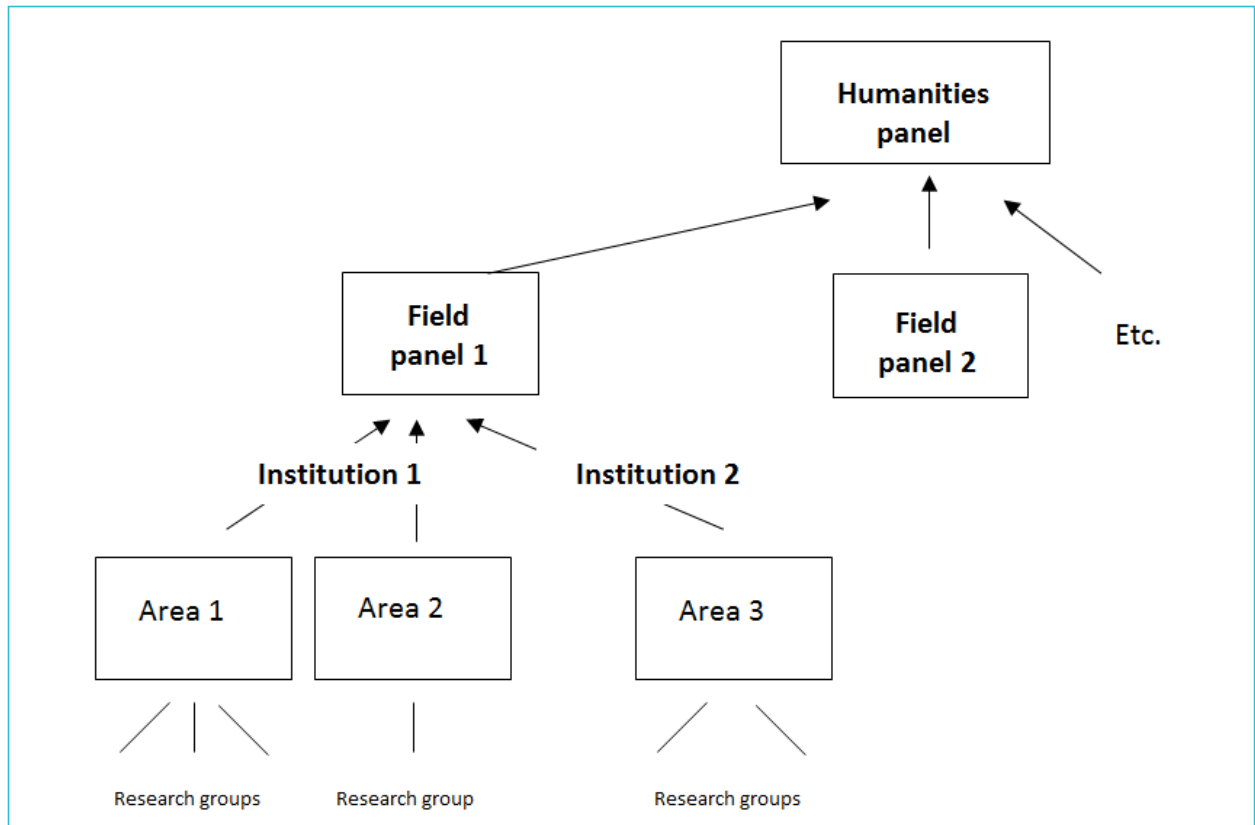
The division of the field of Humanities into panels was based on the established organisational structure of national academic councils (Nasjonale fagråd). There are 24 such academic councils, reflecting the historical development of research areas and teaching subjects within the Humanities in Norway. 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. Eleven of these institutions participated in the panel for Media Studies.

Table 2 Research-performing organisations participating in panel 8 – Media Studies

	University faculties	No of Researchers	No of Research Groups
Norwegian University of Science and Technology	NTNU Faculty of Humanities	17	1
University of Bergen	UiB Faculty of Humanities	8	1
University of Bergen	UiB Faculty of Social Sciences	28	2
University of Oslo	UiO Faculty of Humanities	44	3
The Arctic University of Norway (UiT)	UiT Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education	10	
University of Agder	University of Agder	5	
	Other HE-institutions		
	Lillehammer University College	9	1
	NLA University College	18	
	Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences	27	2
	Oslo School of Architecture and Design	6	1
	Volda University College	5	

2 Assessment at the national level

The panel thoroughly discussed their assessment of the state of Media and Communication studies in Norway. The subsequent observations are based on the following information:

- National-level data on publications and research personnel within the Humanities between 2011 and 2015.
- National-level bibliometric data on publication channels in Media and Communication studies between 2011 and 2015.
- Self-assessments of 11 institutions that participated in the national evaluation of Media and Communication studies.
- Self-assessments of selected research groups within the participating institutions (11 in total).

2.1 Preliminary remarks

The evaluation of universities, university colleges and institutions of applied sciences allowed the panel to evaluate a wide variety of institutions that engage in Media and Communication research in Norway and to develop an understanding of how these institutions relate to one another. In this sense, the panel's work can be understood as mapping this research area at the national level. However, because Media Studies are not only organised by the higher education system as a subfield of the Humanities, but are also practised under the umbrella of other academic fields, most notably Social Sciences, it was evident from the outset that some relevant media research being conducted in Norway – e.g. research on media audiences – was not available to the panel. The panel therefore worked on the assumption that the general picture of the research area at the national level would necessarily remain incomplete. This also limits what the panel can meaningfully conclude about the overall outlook for Media and Communication scholarship in Norway.

Another omission in the panel's terms of reference related to the assessment's structural approach. Research was evaluated as it was conducted within institutions of higher education as well as by individual research groups. At the same time, the panel was not able to assess individual research projects funded by the RCN or other funding agencies.

2.2 General observations

The limitations notwithstanding, the panel was positively impressed by the plurality and variety of the Norwegian units engaging in Media and Communication research, some of which were more specialised and some more generalised. In principle, the panel considered plurality to be a positive factor: a variety of research environments is certainly better than a monoculture. However, the diversity also raised some concerns within the panel, most notably that excessive plurality could potentially lead to fragmentation and weak research output. A coordinated research focus and allocation of resources at the national level, as well as further specialisation of research organisations are measures that might prevent excessive plurality of research and fragmentation. These remarks concern institutions at all levels, both the leading universities and university colleges.

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Within this general picture, the panel noted significant differences between the evaluated institutions. The panel's impression is that there is, in effect, a three-tier national hierarchy, in which the research area seems to be dominated by two top universities, followed by a small number of middle-level organisations, mainly smaller universities and university colleges. The institutions' position in this hierarchy does not, however, reflect research productivity and quality. Some middle-level institutions made a strong impression by demonstrating a high production rate and quality without extensive resources. Nevertheless, there are a few institutions with limited resources at the bottom of the scale whose contribution to research remains weak. Apart from their lack of original research output, the scarcity of resources in some of these smaller institutions might considerably hamper their ability to fully support the development of research students and staff.

2.3 Strengths and weaknesses of Norwegian Media and Communication research in an international context

The international visibility of this research area was difficult to assess on the basis of the available data. The performance of the institutions seems to vary greatly. When international visibility is measured in publication figures, the proportion of publications in English between 2011 and 2015 varied from 37% (Volda) to 93% (UiB, Faculty of Humanities). The average in Media Studies was 63%, compared to 57% overall in the Humanities. Similarly, the proportion of Level 2 publications over the same period varied from 11% (University of Agder and NLA University College) to 34% (UiB, Faculty of Humanities). The average for Media Studies was 24%, which matched the overall figure for the Humanities, 23%. (See Appendix Report 2016: p. 7.) Based on these figures, Media and Communication research appears to be on a par with the average in the Humanities in general.

The panel was not able to pinpoint specific research areas that stand out as exceptional in an international comparison. However, there appear to be several pockets of promising research in various areas. Research on media innovation is a particularly interesting field with the capacity to produce original and, indeed, innovative output. In addition, the field of Film Studies appears to produce some original research of interest to international audiences. Climate communication is another field that produces strong though not particularly innovative, international output.

The main weaknesses of the research field relate to what the panel could best describe as a degree of complacency. This attitude could be due to the relative generosity of and ease of access to funding from national funding sources. A number of the evaluated institutions do not seem to actively endeavour to access new sources of funding. This is particularly apparent in the lack of concrete measures to attract European funding, despite interest often being expressed.

A related weakness is the overall insularity of the national field. Participating institutions only demonstrated limited international research cooperation and recruitment of international researchers. At the other end of the scale, however, the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Oslo indicated that it had recruited 80% of its new staff internationally. If this becomes a persistent pattern, such a high level of international recruitment could be seen as excluding Norwegian scholars. Most notably, there appears to be no common policy on international recruitment.

Finally, there is a degree of conservatism in Norwegian Media and Communication research. Aside from the area of media innovation, much of the research seems to be stuck in the traditional field of legacy media. This sometimes gave the impression that the changes that have taken place in the media environment over the past 20 years did not happen.

2.4 Research cooperation (national and international)

A significant area for improvement in Norwegian Media and Communication studies concerns international and national research cooperation. Overall, the proportion of publications with international co-authorship in Media Studies was 13% in 2015, compared with 14% for the Humanities overall. While this puts Media Studies on a par with the average for the Humanities, there is certainly room for improvement in this area.

Promisingly, the importance of international cooperation seems to be generally recognised, and most of the participating institutions and research groups mentioned such cooperation as one of their main goals. However, there was relatively little concrete evidence of actual participation in international projects. The number of memberships of international boards and organisations, for instance, appeared to be relatively low. As always, there were notable exceptions to this general picture. For instance, the research group on journalism, globalisation and climate change at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences struck the panel as being well connected internationally.

The lack of evidence of widespread research cooperation at an international level was mirrored by a similar scarcity of research collaboration at the national level. The proportion of publications with external national co-authors in 2011–2015 was 9% in Media Studies, only slightly above the average for the Humanities (7%). The links to other higher education institutions appeared to be weak. Moreover, there were few signs of interdisciplinary cooperation within institutions. While there are advances in cooperation between disciplines at the institutional level due to administrative reorganisation, these links are rarely reflected in actual research cooperation across disciplines.

Researchers and research groups do not appear to be actively encouraged and given support to seek cross-disciplinary collaboration. Instead, researchers and departments may often feel that they are competing against other departments within their institutions, which discourages them from developing collaborative initiatives. Institutional structures and policies should encourage, not discourage, cross-disciplinary cooperation.

2.5 Funding and infrastructure

Aside from a few exceptions, the institutions seem to operate on a relatively strong and stable financial footing. The relatively secure and long-term forms of funding benefit research and education, allowing the staff to concentrate on their actual tasks rather than spending an excessive amount of time on preparing new applications.

The panel noted that Norwegian institutions have participated in a limited number of European research projects. As mentioned above, most universities state that it is important to take increasing advantage of European funding channels. This indicates that many of them have begun to prepare for European competition. Initiating and participating in international projects nevertheless remains a weak point in this research area. Few institutions provided concrete descriptions of how they actually go about applying for, e.g. H2020 funding. Notably, however, some institutions have programmes in place to train young researchers to make use of European funding channels.

It appears that the availability of adequate and secure sources of funding from national funding streams does little to incentivise departments to enter the competition for international funding. Agencies appear to fund a variety of issues and topics within the research area, which produces welcome plurality and diversity. At the same time, there seems to be a relative lack of funding for large-scale and long-term projects that could develop internationally visible research. There are some past examples of internationally renowned projects, yet the funding generally appears to lack a specific focus.

Overall, good research leadership and management practices appear to be in place. There is plenty of support for research groups, for instance. As regards the current challenges facing research infrastructure, the panel paid special attention to the formation and operation of research groups. It appears that a number of research groups have been formed on an ad-hoc basis and lack a clear vision for why they exist. There did not always appear to be substantial research collaboration among members of the same group. Moreover, when it comes to interdisciplinary research groups, researchers may feel that participation could carry a risk of weakening links to the home department, and thereby jeopardising future employment opportunities. Again, funding practices may contribute to the lack of interest in developing strong and highly cohesive, long-term research groups based on common interests.

2.6 Staff (incl. training, recruitment, gender balance and mobility)

The panel was positively impressed by the resources and structural support for doctoral training. The Norwegian doctoral training system is based exclusively on salaried PhD student positions, and they are funded by universities and third parties, including the private sector. This leads to a system of relatively few doctoral students, but they do receive sufficient support for academic progress.

Overall, there seems to be adequate resources for staff training. The panel was particularly impressed by the way many institutions integrate professional practitioners from the field of Media and Communication, and support them in their pursuit of PhDs. Good practices seem to be in place for supporting the integration of late-entry practitioners in the institutions. While these practices seem to have mainly emerged as spontaneous responses to the practical needs of individual institutions, planned structures do not appear to be in place at the national level for supporting media professionals' entry into academia.

Recruiting media practitioners to teaching positions appears to be a popular practice among institutions. Some 40% of university teachers/lecturers nationwide do not have a doctoral degree. This is a welcome practice, since practitioners tend to be up-to-date with the ongoing changes in media professions and have good relations with the industry. The Norwegian model of recruiting practitioners to teach while supporting their academic development is highly commendable.

There is considerable variation in the gender balance of staff at different levels of the institutional hierarchy. The balance is quite even until the postdoc phase, but there is a large gender gap at the level of professorships. All the institutions have schemes and plans in place to address the balance, but there is scant evidence of their successful implementation. While this is not a specific problem for Media Studies, there was little explicit reflection in the documents on the reasons why institutions seem to generally fail to advance the gender balance. Moreover, gender balance seems to be practically the only diversity/equality factor that the institutions explicitly address.

The panel noted, that except for gender, references to other forms of equality and diversity were missing from the self-assessment data. Issues such as multiculturalism and the representation of linguistic and ethnic minorities were not mentioned, and there were no specific policies to promote more diversity in recruitment. This is something that the research community should reflect more on.

There is relatively little international staff mobility. With some notable exceptions, the researchers do not appear to regularly take international sabbaticals.

2.7 Cooperation with other sectors of society (e.g. the private and public sectors) and the societal impact and function of the research fields in society

The institutions have reported several examples of research cooperation with other sectors of society. These efforts have mainly been limited to traditional institutions and have not been particularly motivated to search for innovative ways of breaking new ground when mapping potential partners. Overall, there seems to be a lack of a general strategy in this area, with collaboration mainly taking place through individual initiatives. Consequently, there seems to be little explicit reflection on how to collaborate with the public sector or industry and what the objectives of such cooperation are. What is the impact of external collaboration on research, and is there a vision for how research should benefit from such collaboration? Or is collaboration simply a goal in itself?

These considerations were raised during the evaluation of the impact of cases submitted for assessment. The institutions presented a number of cases that differed greatly with respect to their understanding of what constitutes societal impact. Perhaps the most obvious case was the one presented by UiO IMK/HF on 'Media policy', which was able to present concrete evidence of how research, by proposing policy recommendations, had influenced policy planning and policymaking. In some other cases, the impact consisted of an individual researcher acting as an expert on governmental committees. Furthermore, in the case of 'WAR/GAME', the impact was mainly measured by media publicity and local public discourses. It seems evident, that as a concept, the societal impact of Media Studies still needs further clarification. The case studies present rich material for this.

The variety of approaches presented in the impact cases shows the challenges involved in assessing the societal impact of research in this area. When conducting basic research on Media and Communication, immediate impact is all but impossible to measure, and it is very difficult to know what will be of value in the future. Changes in the operational environment of the industry, for instance, may suddenly render a body of research valuable that has been patiently pursued for many years without much fanfare inside or outside academia. At the same time, the pace of change in the industry tends to be faster than the research taking place at the universities. Society and industry do not wait for research to guide them. In this sense, the topics addressed by the research cannot really have an impact on the operation of other sectors.

The question of what constitutes societal impact is also challenging. On the one hand, participating in the development of new mobile applications could qualify as a concrete way of contributing beyond academia, but the broader societal relevance of such innovation can often remain unclear. On the other hand, merited individual academics may have a concrete societal impact, for instance by having advisory roles in government or preparing white papers, but this is seldom recognised as an impact of research, even if the individuals represent a broader research culture.

Overall, the most important societal impact of academia is to be a critical voice in society. In this respect, collaboration with other sectors of society may sometimes have an adverse impact on this basic objective. When engaging with industry, for instance, academics must be able to take a critical view of what the industry is doing. Somewhat alarmingly, a notable feature of the institutional reports was the reluctance to identify social critique as an important objective and contribution to society. This is accentuated by the exclusion from the assessment criteria of the impact that the societal application of research can have for academia and scientific knowledge. From the perspective of the accumulation of critical knowledge, this should be recognised as the most valuable form of societal impact.

Producing public experts and intellectuals who participate actively in public debates is one dimension of this impact, another takes place through the education of future practitioners. However, it is the task of research to make people listen by developing perspectives to collectively address the major societal issues of the day.

2.8 Comments

The panel would like to stress that, despite its critical comments, it recognises that the research area generally functions well, although it produces little internationally leading research. The comments and critiques are meant to encourage the institutions to strengthen their research, not to imply that they are underperforming.

Grants and salaries, from early-career researchers onwards, appear to be very high. This, combined with relaxed conditions for the use of major grants, may constitute a problem, for instance when senior researchers are able to buy themselves out of teaching. This may hamper the channelling of up-to-date research into university teaching.

2.9 Overall recommendations

Given the healthy diversity of the research area and its institutional structure, the panel recommends that the government and major funding bodies continue to ensure that Media and Communication Studies can be researched and taught at a variety of institutions. This means that, while allocating resources to a few large institutions can help them achieve excellence at the international level, other units should also be supported in future. The very small institutions at the bottom of the hierarchy have few resources with which to make a meaningful contribution to research, and they might need to reconsider whether or not they should continue with Media Studies, or whether it would be more advisable to pool their research and teaching resources. However, as long as they continue to teach Media and Communication, the panel encourages them to also engage with research in order to keep up with international developments in this area.

The panel encourages Norwegian institutions to become more competitive in applying for European funding. This applies in particular to the larger universities. National funding instruments could be further developed to increasingly encourage, foster and incentivise international exchange and collaboration.

The panel encourages institutions within the field to collaborate more with each other. Especially the two dominating universities could benefit from greater collaboration. A 'virtual university' that connects researchers on specific subjects – for instance journalism research – would be one concrete form of such collaboration.

The panel would like to see Media Studies researchers increasingly getting together with people from other disciplines. Institutions and funding instruments should increasingly incentivise the development of structures and practices based on cross-unit and interdisciplinary collaboration. Universities, specifically, can do more to encourage interdisciplinary research by, for instance, funding interdisciplinary research groups.

The panel recommends developing national-level initiatives that foster research collaboration between industry and research.

The panel encourages research groups to develop a stronger vision. The formation and development of research groups could be encouraged by a new funding instrument. This could support a specific research group for a specific period, for example five years, and then consider whether to continue the funding (if such a policy is not already in place).

Good practices seem to be in place for supporting the recruitment of late-entry practitioners to research and higher education institutions. The panel would like to see more structural support for these practices. The authorities might consider developing a national system for training practitioners as academics.

The panel recommends that, in order to better address gender balance issues, the institutions reflect more on why gender imbalance persists and what they can do to improve the situation. In addition, we encourage institutions to pay more attention to other diversity and equality factors.

The panel encourages institutions to continue to reflect on how they could have a greater societal impact. Academia's function is to provide a critical perspective on social conditions and change, and this critique should be seen as a form of societal impact in itself. However, as the critical impact of research depends on its ability to develop new knowledge, we would like to encourage institutions to reflect on how they can contribute to the theoretical development of the research area.

3 Assessment of institutions and research areas

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

The Faculty of Humanities at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNUHF) is currently undergoing a merger which, by 2017, will make NTNUHF one of eight faculties at NTNU, comprising six departments of varying size. According to the institutional self-assessment, NTNUHF's total expenditure decreased from NOK 176 million (2013) to NOK 163 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure increased, however, from 32% to 34% in the same period. The 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 Media Studies, 17 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: one impact case study and two research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

NTNUHF is a faculty of humanities in a university of science and technology. The university itself has a long-term strategy, revolving around the concept of 'knowledge for a better world', where the Humanities play a relevant role in the various scientific departments and groups. There seems to be a clear governing structure and professional strategic planning, including 'spearhead' projects and the implementation of research groups as a focal point for resource allocation, although that has not been common for the Humanities in the past. Some challenges may lie in the ongoing restructuring of faculties and the acceptance of strategic goals that may feel alien from the viewpoint of the Humanities.

The SWOT analysis bears witness to these issues, and such challenges are not uncommon in restructuring processes (which may lead to higher consistency and productivity in the future). Some risks may emanate from the potentially solitary, always framed as 'interdisciplinary', role of the Humanities within the wider context of Science and Technology departments, which may primarily be portrayed as a supporting role. Acceptance problems within the larger university structure, as well as integration problems within the home discipline(s) may result from this and need to be addressed. At the area level, the Media Arts research group is small (four core professional members) and very new (formed in January 2015). It appears to be buoyant and energetic.

Resources

Good resources are available across the faculty, supporting all areas of the faculty's research with substantial core funding from the government and a notable research infrastructure. The fact sheet reveals a strong and laudable focus on research personnel in the budget. The percentage of external funding is also notable, as is the diversity of sources. So far, as for the faculty as a whole, the RCN has been the major source of external funding within the area of assessment, with four new applications

submitted in 2016. For future development of funding and risk management, greater diversity of substantial funding is recommended (for example, participation in H2020 programmes, as also noted in the data on strategic development): However, there should not be too much reliance on external funding. Overall, the financial resources are convincing.

Research production and quality

At the institutional level, the self-assessment document and data provided are indicative of a productive Humanities unit within the Department of Art and Media Studies. The examples and the impact case provided bear witness to notable strength in the field of Norwegian film, but also of good quality work in other areas, primarily in the field of visual communication. Current projects span a range of diverse research areas, including the mediatisation of terrorism and neuroimaging. NTNUHF is a productive faculty with an average percentage of Level 2 publications (24%) and of English language publications (64%). However, the proportion of journal articles is comparatively low and the proportion of scholars with four or more publications/publications points during the period examined is well below average. On the other hand, the proportion of people with no output during the analysis period is at the average level.

Recruitment and training

The self-assessment outlines a strategic HR plan, also mentioning measures such as research leave and other means of improving recruitment and training, including the objective of increasing researcher mobility by enabling staff to stay abroad for longer periods during sabbaticals. International recruitment has been very strong, with 100% of permanent positions having been advertised internationally. However, statistics would have helped the panel assess this area. Mobility has yet to reach the desired levels, but the impact of research leave and other measures will only be visible in the years to come. The distribution between research, training and other activities seems to be healthy for PhD students, postdocs and full/associate professors, but the high level of assistant professors' teaching duties may be considered a hindrance to their career development process. Overall, the measures aimed at improving recruitment and training seem to be professionally handled. At unit level, however, there is too much emphasis on doctoral students and there is no specific mention of training. Although the self-assessment document states that senior members of staff mentor and guide affiliated PhD students, it would have been useful to see information about how recruitment and expansion are to be managed in the future.

Networking

The description of networking and interdisciplinary cooperation is convincing. At the university level, several measures are taken to professionalise networking and research collaboration (even including an office in Brussels) and collected in an action plan. By nature, the faculty is a hub for other disciplines in the given environment. There is a certain risk, though, that its networking may primarily occur within the bounds of the university if external and interdisciplinary cooperation are not incentivised, due to the many possibilities for internal cooperation. However, as noted in the self-assessment, the strong position in Film Studies is attractive for external partners as well, and the unique qualities of the unit make it an attractive match for third parties.

Impact on teaching

The self-assessment indicates that there are some issues with respect to teaching. The connection between teaching and research is deemed to be less than ideal, and MA recruitment is seen as challenging. The strong focus on research groups and external funding may contribute to such

challenges, and stronger integration of research and teaching, as outlined in the self-assessment report, may indeed rectify some of the problems.

Other societal impact

As outlined in the university's strategic plan, it aims to contribute to 'knowledge for a better world'. The Faculty of Humanities, and the area of Media Arts in particular, has a societal impact by researching and conserving national heritage (i.e. Norwegian film), and they also contribute to society through artistic work connected to academic research. The impact case is indicative of the relevance of the faculty's research to the analysis and preservation of national heritage, and it is a fine example of research being both applied and scientifically inspirational at the same time.

Overall assessment

NTNUHF is a productive area with strong researchers, for example in Norwegian Film Studies. It attracts external funding and successfully publishes in both national and international contexts. The interdisciplinary nature of the university has some clear impact on the strategic positioning and management of the unit – which can be beneficial, but also entails some risks (i.e. the question of whether structures and procedures are applicable to the specific case of the Humanities). The various measures and programmes aimed at professionalising and developing the area appear to be professional, at least judging from the self-assessment report.

Feedback

The restructuring of faculties, and the strong focus on research groups may be beneficial, but some of the strategic measures may also be perceived as alien to the Humanities. This can lead to reactance. Despite the interdisciplinarity of the environment, a strong disciplinary identity may be important, indeed even vital in order to successfully cooperate in the long term.

3.2 University of Bergen, Faculty of Social Sciences (UiBSV)

Established in 1970, the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Bergen (UiBSV) has seven departments. It provides a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary study programmes, all of which are research-based and qualify for advanced study up to doctoral degree level. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of the Faculty of Social Sciences increased from NOK 303.5 million (2013) to NOK 325.3 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure has been constant at 17% per year in the same period. The 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 3.9 million per year on average).

Within the research area of Media Studies, 28 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: two research groups (Journalism studies and Rhetoric & Aesthetics), two impact case studies and three research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

At the institutional level, UiB is clearly organised efficiently and transparently, and a coherent research strategy is in place for the continued development of the Humanities. Information Science and Media Studies is one of seven departments under the Faculty of Social Sciences, established in 1985, and a further merger between Media Studies and the Department of Information Science took place in 2004. The strategy is to build a strong foundation for research and research-led teaching, and the faculty is notably interdisciplinary in its aims at all teaching levels. The governing structures are straightforward and logical in terms of both academic and the administrative sides of the organisation, and these are well explained in the self-assessment document. A five-year strategy is in place that encompasses research, education, communication and organisation. The goals are clearly established and the new main research areas for 2016—2022 are climate and energy transition. At the area level, Media Studies was established in 1985 as a merger between the Humanities and Social Sciences, and it is a strong unit of 12 professors, six associate professors, two researchers, three postdocs and 17 PhD candidates. PhD candidates and postdocs have the possibility of studying and working abroad.

Resources

The institution provides adequate infrastructure and resources through its Committee of Infrastructure, which hosts a range of database and media-based units. The department's main research groups do not have their own budgets although modest internal funding schemes and seed money are available. Staff are granted a whole year of sabbatical leave every six years. External funding accounts for 17% of total expenditure, which is high.

Research production and quality

Several departments under the Faculty of Social Sciences at UiB have been positively evaluated recently, with resources being channelled into increasing participation in Horizon 2020, with researchers being urged to participate in all three major calls. The Media Studies programme spans four principal areas: media institutions; media audiences; media texts; and media and society. After the 2004 merger, the department elected to organise research into groups: journalism; rhetoric and aesthetics; media, ICT and cultural policy; media use and audience studies. The document does not adequately explain the relationship between these groups and the previously mentioned areas,

although the research groups are explained in sufficient detail. Research publications are complemented by a number of externally-funded projects, including 'Journalistic Reorientations' (NOK 12 million), 'Responsible Adoption of Visual Surveillance' (NOK 18 million), SCANPUB (NOK 37 million), among others. Although productivity has been above the national average, suggesting that strategic planning has been sound, there is little evidence of multidisciplinary collaboration. In the interview in October, the institution emphasised positive aspects of research groups such as cooperation between the groups 'on a personal level', although 'on a formal level', they admit, 'there is not much cooperation between the groups'. This lack of formal interaction does not provide a strong foundation for future growth and development.

Recruitment and training

At the institutional level, there is a firm strategic commitment to equal opportunities. Mechanisms are implemented if the proportion of female employees dips below 40%, although, in the academic domain, only 38% of positions are filled by women, compared to 72% in administration. Gender inequality is more marked when it comes to permanent positions at associate and professorial levels and it remains unclear how UiB intends to address this. This imbalance was very marked, and UiB compares unfavourably with other Norwegian institutions when it comes to gender imbalance, especially at full professor level. As the interview in October makes clear, there are ongoing issues relating to gender balance, and recruitment is challenging. It has proven hard, for example, to attract applicants from Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen.

Other forms of diversity are not addressed at the institutional level. What is more clearly outlined is the international dimension of recruitment, with a desire to recruit more foreign nationals to assist PhD recruitment. However, this is in direct contrast to Media Studies, where there is a tendency to recruit from among their own community. Such a high proportion of staff developed 'in house' has the potential to undermine diversification of all kinds. Within the unit, recruitment is very well outlined in the self-assessment document and is a clear strength, with seven scholars recruited to permanent positions between 2010 and 2016.

Recruitment is primarily driven by the desire to achieve optimal research and publication, alongside the aims of developing the quality of study and strengthening dissemination to the non-academic community. The unit is mindful of issues such as gender and age balance (recent vacancies have been filled by early-career scholars), and it evidently believes that it trains excellent scholars, as many staff members are former UiB postdocs.

Networking

Less evidence is provided for this field than others. Although there is a stated commitment to prioritising international collaboration, these ventures are not – at an institutional level – detailed. There is more detail about the Media City Bergen collaboration with media industries, which is an innovative venture. The Media Studies department is well connected, as itemised elsewhere in this review document, but, as mentioned in the SWOT Analysis, there are few international staff members, which will hamper networking.

Impact on teaching

The institutional pages of the self-assessment document highlight Media Studies more in this area than for the faculty as a whole, although it is useful to have the relationship between research and teaching placed in a broader context. All research groups in the department teach across BA and MA programmes and the range of BA degrees is good. There are opportunities for students to engage in research at all levels in the Social Sciences Faculty, with some more specific links between student

research and research groups being identified within Media Studies in particular. The institution recognises that the increased separation between research and teaching through 'buying out' top researchers from teaching is 'a challenge', and acknowledges that there is a 'conflict of aims' at the institutional level in relation to this question. In Media Studies, there is a favourable division of labour between research and teaching (46% each, with 8% dedicated to administration). A time sheet is submitted by each member of staff each term, and the department evidently feels that administrative duties are sufficiently covered.

Other societal impact

Societal impact is addressed specifically through the two Media case studies submitted. The first of these is on video games research and its impact on the Norwegian gaming industry, cultural policy and enterprise. Research into gaming is a buoyant area in Media Studies and the department has been a pioneer in this field at all levels of research. The documentation itemises the key publications and researchers in this case study. The second impact case study highlights 'Words that Work' – a research documentation project about the history of political speechmaking in Norway. Although this project has been active in Media Studies since 2005, it is less interesting than the previous case study. The intention has been to write up the results of the academic research in accessible ways, and the project has proved successful to some extent – a former Minister of Culture is even cited as stating that the project has contributed to an increased interest in speech writing in Norway in recent years. However, taking into account the considerable resources at its disposal, UiBSV is not producing the top-end, cutting edge research the assessor anticipated. Societal impact is uneven.

The interview in October further clarified some aspects of the unit's societal impact. There is a new strategy in place for forging links, for instance, with Media City Bergen. The importance of MCB relates to the future significance of big data studies and the desire and need to develop this area. Part of this development is the creation of a digital core facility linking researchers to citizens (DIGSSCORE).

Overall assessment

According to the self-assessment document, the department has, since the merger, performed above average for the Faculty of Social Sciences, a claim backed up by statistics, such as a tripling of publications between 2007/8 and 2014/5, more than 20% having been published in high-ranked journals and by top publishers. This is a productive, high profile and diverse unit with a strong commitment to media and technology-based research. However, research productivity is not matched in all areas by innovative research and thinking. Grant capture is good but not outstanding. There are some excellent individual scholars in the research group, but in other areas the unit has produced disappointing work.

Feedback

Performance in Media Studies is not as good as might have been anticipated considering the resources and institutional support available. The documentation is thorough, but its claims are not always borne out by the evidence provided. There is a slight sense of complacency running through the documentation and a concomitant lack of self-criticism and reflection, which we would advise the institution to address. The institutional pages make bold claims in relation to all of the above areas, although it is not always clear how the objectives are being implemented or met. There is evidence that this is a high-performing unit, but the future strategy could be better detailed, especially in the area of diversity. UiB comes across as rather inward-looking, although the proposed collaboration with industry is promising.

3.3 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 Faculty of Humanities' total expenditure increased from NOK 206.1 million (2013) to NOK 234 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure also increased from 21.7% to 22.9% in the same period. The 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 Media Studies, eight researchers were listed for HUMEVAL in one research group (Digital Culture & Electronic Literature). The following data were submitted by the institution: one impact case study and two research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

UiBHF is a Faculty of Humanities built on several departments and two inter-faculty centres. It should be noted that as a part of the departmental reorganisation of UiB in 2007, most research within the research area of Media Studies was relocated to the Faculty of Social Sciences. The research group on Digital Culture & Electronic Literature, located at the Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies remains in the Faculty of Humanities.

The organisational structure of the faculty is well laid-out and seems to be clearly defined on the basis of the self-evaluation report. As with other units under analysis, restructuring processes are in progress that may affect the current structure. Risks may emanate from the diversity of groups and centres in the faculty, i.e. in situations where internal goals diverge. The interview suggests that connections within the research groups mainly build on proposals, which reflects the more ad hoc nature of the groups, and the faculty struggles to maintain connections between the research groups and other faculties. Based on previous evaluations, measures have been taken to improve the situation, and a development plan appears to be in place that aims to address such issues, aiming for excellence and stronger participation in Horizon 2020 programmes. Administrative support is one important element here – however, implementing an ‘incubator’ environment for developing strong ideas and international networks may also be necessary. Some steps have been taken to this end (including international seminars, researcher training etc.). The effect of these steps may take some time, though, as they are part of long-term strategies that require patience.

It is a good sign that the faculty is aware of challenges and that it is in the process of developing strategies, some of which should have been adopted even sooner, to cope with these challenges. In general, the faculty appears to adopt a ‘distributed’ approach to research, starting with the individual researcher and leaving levels of cooperation open to variation. While this is definitely a pragmatic approach, allowing flexibility and diversity in a faculty with a variety of disciplines, it may not be the ideal way of pursuing research internationalisation strategies. H2020 and other international projects often require a lot of resources in terms of support, profiles (acquisition/project management/applied research) that may be more efficient when pooled, at least to a certain level. Research groups are typically a way of achieving this. A more focused collaboration strategy, e.g. around specific topics instead of disciplines, may be a good way forward here, that goes further than the aforementioned identification of research priorities at doctoral level as stated in the self-assessment. The ‘cluster’ strategy and focus on interdisciplinary and inter-faculty collaboration may

be a first step in that direction – although it is not too clear from the self-assessment how the faculty will pursue these aims. For example, despite the stated affinity in the research area, no initiatives for more collaboration between the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Social Sciences are mentioned in the self-assessment.

Resources

The fact sheet indicates that solid resources are available to the area, with slight growth in the three years under analysis. The core expenditure is on research personnel, with much smaller amounts being spent on other personnel and running costs. The proportion is very much in line with a good practice for units in the field. The proportion of external funding of the total expenditure is not excessive, and is within healthy margins. Most of the external funding comes from the RCN. International funding is primarily linked to the EU, but the sums are comparatively low when judged against the national external funding or the core funding. Some growth in terms of externally funded research projects, especially international ones, is recommended. The main focus should be on attracting external funding, and, in the process, seeking more interdisciplinary cooperation. It is promising to see resources (support for project coordination, writing, positioning) allocated to this aim.

Research production and quality

The bibliometric analysis reveals a high percentage of Level 2 publications – the highest in the departments and units under analysis. The proportion of publications in English is very high (at 93%), and far above the average in Media Studies. The percentage of journal articles is somewhat below average. The proportion of people with four or more publications / publication points during the period examined is very much in line with the national average in Media Studies. However, the proportion of people with no publication points is quite high (at 38%), so this may be indicative of a productivity imbalance within the area. The research examples provided are solid, but not outstanding in international terms.

Recruitment and training

The self-assessment notes several steps taken to improve recruitment and training processes. Positions are announced internationally, and this has some notable effects on the workforce. The interview demonstrated, however, that the impact from increasing the international staff on, for example, PhD training has been limited so far, which would suggest that a more concrete strategy is needed to get more out of the new staff. Travel support for PhD students and postdocs is also mentioned (as well as sabbaticals for tenured staff). Some of these steps seem to be individual, while some are structured or formalised. It is laudable that the faculty invests in a recruitment strategy for PhD researchers and is willing to invest in HR management, including describing scenarios for non-academic career paths for researchers.

Networking

The self-assessment notes multiple networking and internationalisation tools, as well as multiple collaborations and exchange programmes with international partners. This may explain the notable number of English publications, and, overall, the efforts are laudable. Networking within the university seems to be less central, but may remedy some of the fragmentation noted in the SWOT analysis.

Impact on teaching

The study programmes at the faculty are currently under review in a project called 'HF2018' aimed at more flexibility and cross-disciplinary programmes. This appears to be necessary, as the current description of programmes is somewhat formal, suggesting a fragmentation of programmes within traditional disciplinary borders. There seems to be tension between research and teaching that emerges from such a situation, and measures/incentives to cooperate on research and teaching might be considered.

Other societal impact

The unit provides an impact case comprising projects focusing on electronic literature as an innovation field. The project outcomes can be applied to society, science and art, as outlined in the case description and the section on artistic research. The self-assessment notes that this is a developing field in Norway, but not to the same extent internationally – so the steps outlined here are welcome. Overall, the societal impact of a diverse faculty may be equally diverse, and with some strong cases (like the one provided). A point of attention, in this case, but also in general, is again interdisciplinary collaboration. The e-little case is strong on its own, but could have been truly leading if collaboration had been envisioned with engineers, developers, analysts etc. As such, the case is both an illustration of the faculty's impact and of its 'parochialism'.

Overall assessment

UiBHF gives the impression of being a traditional Humanities Faculty, somewhat affected by fragmentation, small units and disciplinary boundaries. As noted in the self-evaluation report, individual researchers are strong, but there are signs of some notable imbalance within the faculty. There are relatively few research staff in digital culture and electronic literature, with six full-time members. The research area has established strong international networks, but its cross-disciplinary collaboration within the faculty and across the faculties needs to be strengthened in the future.

As it is, UiBHF comes across as a rather old fashioned faculty that has strong individual researchers, but that to a large extent fails to exploit this to excel as a whole. On the one hand, it is positive to see the faculty seeking strategies to address this, such as opening up to other disciplines through clusters, projects with societal impact etc., but, at the same time, the faculty could have responded earlier to the challenges. Admittedly, not all disciplines lend themselves to collaborative environments to the same degree, and choosing a more individual approach to research might be a valuable choice. Still, this approach is unlikely to provide fertile ground for tackling issues of diminishing resources and decreasing student numbers.

Feedback

Overall, it seems that the fragmentation and imbalance within the faculty may lead to issues that negatively affect the overall, as well as the average, performance. It is debatable whether a traditional faculty structure, with strong disciplinary orientations, might impede the development of future fields that probably transcend such disciplinary demarcations. It may be advisable for UiB as a whole to rethink these structures, and, when it comes to Media research, strengthen it by pooling more resources around topics / fields instead of disciplines. Naturally, divergent approaches within the Humanities, Social Sciences and Science, as well as micro-politics, need to be considered, and should not be taken lightly.

As in many other Humanities faculties, the context of reduced numbers of students and hard science priorities at the university and the national level form a daunting background for the faculty. They are right in pointing out the opportunities, e.g. in terms of creative and interdisciplinary research.

However, clearer, even bigger steps could already have been taken. Admittedly, cases like the one presented on electronic literature show the impact, but also the limitations, given that such a topic could have formed an ideal basis for collaboration with computer sciences, software developers, data engineers etc. Hence, the case does not live up to its full potential, which could also be said of the faculty as a whole.

3.4 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 also decreased from 27% to 24% in the same period. The 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 also decreased (NOK 1 million in 2015).

Within the research area of Media Studies, 44 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL across three research groups (Media Aesthetics, Media Innovation and POLKOM). The following data were submitted by the institution: six impact case studies and two research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

UiOHF is a Faculty of Humanities organised as seven departments. The faculty has branches abroad, which are run in cooperation with other Norwegian universities. It hosts the only Centres of Excellence in Humanities, which are funded by the RCN. The self-assessment reports that the size of the institution may be a weakness when it comes to ensuring coordination across departments and disciplines. To address this, coordination efforts are made between departments and the faculty, and also at department level. One self-reported weakness is the lack of critical mass in the smallest disciplines, which may also lead to imbalances between disciplines.

The faculty follows a strategy of prioritising a few research areas in each department while European funding is sought to fund as many other fields as possible. Internationalisation is another important objective for the faculty, following a previous evaluation by the RCN. The interview suggests higher ambitions with respect to proposal writing and seeking international funds like ERCs. Still, these are high-level funds and a more thought through strategy to support applicants from within the research groups might be advisable. Within the institution, the area is represented by the Department of Media and Communication (IMK).

Resources

The fact sheet shows a slight decrease in resources over the 2013-2015 period. The core expenditure is on research personnel, with smaller amounts spent on other costs. The institution relies on external funding for a quarter of its budget. The increasing dependence on external funding is self-reported as a weakness, notably due to the instability of such funding. Indeed, some sources of external funding decreased drastically over the period, e.g. the external funding from other public Norwegian sources and the external funding from the EU. Still, there is an increase in the resources received from the RCN. To illustrate this, the University of Oslo alone received 49% of RCN funding for the Humanities in the HE sector in 2014. The infrastructure budget is a self-reported weakness as infrastructure becomes more and more expensive. In some fields, in particular, infrastructure has only recently become expensive, e.g. for language or music technology.

Research production and quality

The research area has the largest number of staff and the highest number of publication points, representing 26% of publications points accumulated at the national level. The production of publications per individual researcher is the highest in the national comparison (2.4 publication

points per researcher; see NIFU Report, 2016:14). The area is above the average (for Media Studies) for all key indicators, namely the proportion of Level 2 publications, the proportion of publications in English, the proportion of journal articles and the proportion of staff members with four or more publication points. This may be a result of strategies to encourage publication in peer-reviewed and international high-impact journals. However, it is also above average for the proportion of staff members with no publications, which may indicate some imbalance within the department. There are financial incentives for cross-disciplinary research and teaching. Finally, the few examples of research presented as cases are outstanding at the international level.

Recruitment and training

Good aims are pursued and good procedures have been implemented. Firstly, each department has a strategic recruitment plan. In general, international recruitment is favoured and monitored, and 80% of scientific staff recruited by the faculty in 2013 were international. Secondly, there is an aim to achieve gender balance, with precise targets set at faculty and department levels, and the employment of tools such as sorting committees. Thirdly, annual interviews are routinely held with PhD students and postdocs. Finally, PhD students and postdocs are encouraged to spend time abroad.

At the faculty level, one outcome of this strategy is the large, stable number of PhD graduates, with more women than men. Another good point in the area is the higher share of personnel with doctorates compared to other institutions. However, there is also a lower proportion of professors.

Networking

Internationalisation is one of UiOHF's main objectives. This is pursued through several strategies, including international recruitment, student mobility and targets for funding from European programmes. At the faculty level, many types of international cooperation are reported, with more than 250 agreements with international partners and collaborations with entities in neighbouring countries as well as, e.g., in the US, South Africa and China. There are also strong national networks. Finally, there are also collaborations with non-academic partners, such as the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise. At area level, there is less information available (mainly in the cases), but it also seems to indicate very good practices. However, there seems to be more potential for effective networking than their performance shows.

Impact on teaching

The self-assessment stresses the importance of combining research and teaching, in particular for MA students. Students meet researchers at all levels. On the other hand, there are difficulties relating to the adjustment of research and education, which are also acknowledged. Student mobility is systematically stimulated. Thus, there are mobility windows in almost all programmes at BA and MA levels. For PhD students, mobility to relevant international institutions is financed. However, there are no figures or other indicators to show how all this works in practice.

Other societal impact

The area provides several impact cases, all interesting and some outstanding at the international level. The array of cases in particular illustrates that research in the area aims to have an impact on different types of stakeholders, e.g. inter-governmental institutions such as NATO (security and the media) or the UN (children and the Internet); (music) industry stakeholders and policymakers (clouds and concerts); or the general public (situated simulations). All cases have an international scope, while some are also of interest at the national level.

Overall assessment

Overall, UiOHF, and in particular IMK, is a very good faculty with excellent research, and a relevant focus on internationalisation followed up at different levels, from students to staff to publication. The institution and the area are able to impact different types of stakeholders, and often at the international level. However, it has a few weaknesses, in particular regarding resources, which may prove too unstable (notably due to the share of external funding) and/or insufficient in relation to increasing needs.

Feedback

As noted in the overall assessment, it is crucial for the university to invest resources to remedy the instability of the area. Another one of the panel's recommendations is related to the institution's size. The large size of the department requires coordination (as already reported in detail in the self-assessment), but it must be ensured that there is not too much imbalance (for example between teams of various sizes or between researchers with very different levels of productivity).

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

The humanistic disciplines at the 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 located 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. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by other public Norwegian sources.

Within the research area of Media Studies, ten researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The institution has submitted one impact case study but no research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The institutional organisational structure is clear and logical. The Humanities, Social Sciences and Education Faculty [HSL] has a pyramidal, top-down structure with the Faculty Board at the top (whose chair is external). The documentation defines HSL as a multidisciplinary entity, which wishes to maintain a 'broad variety of disciplines' and to contribute strategically to the wider 'grand challenges' of the university as a whole: health; climate; technology; sustainability; societal development. The university follows a three-year strategic planning cycle, the current cycle running from 2014 to 2017. To achieve its research goals (see below), the faculty has initiated a 'differentiated research group model' offering support for activities such as external income funding applications. There is a transparent 'Policy for Gender Equality' in place, but we did not see an overarching Equal Opportunities policy.

Research and teaching are prioritised within the area of research, and it organises its own research into academic communities. It is standard for staff to allocate 5% of their time to administrative duties and sabbaticals are considered essential for enhancing the quality and impact of UiTHSL's research output. There is a formula in place for sabbatical entitlement. In the SWOT analysis, the Humanities are described as organised but potentially fragmented, as many of its units are small (for example, there are currently no postdoctoral researchers in Media Studies and only one PhD).

Resources

The resources available are solid, with substantial core funding from the government and a notable research infrastructure. R&D employees have 'good access' to internal funds, although the faculty as a whole has not performed well in the competition for external funding, described as a result of increased competition for research funding nationally and internationally. However, as the fact sheet indicates, while core funding has almost doubled from 2013 –2015, external national funding – although always insignificant by comparison – has declined by 50% over the same period. Departmental resources seem key to the success of the research area: the equipment for data analysis; the technical support needed for linguistics; the larger databases and language labs for 'Trolling' analysis etc. Employees on R&D contracts are funded and encouraged to go abroad.

Research production and quality

There is a good publishing culture, with some internationally recognised researchers in the faculty, although the SWOT analysis makes it clear that some disciplines do not disseminate enough. The faculty has established a series of ‘research goals’ underpinning research within the faculty’s overall three-year plan (2014—2017), but these are couched in very general terms (‘offer a good PhD education’; ‘become strong in research-driven innovation’ etc.) so are not easy to assess. International research activity is extensive, the document states, although some detail is lacking. In response to the Norwegian Long-Term Plan for Research and HE, the faculty is actively trying to increase world-leading research activity, and the document singles out the ‘Major Research Infrastructure’ venture for special mention. Within the area of assessment – which is located in the Department of Language and Culture – there are two principal research activities discussed in the self-assessment document, of which War/Game research is the most advanced. The self-assessment document suggests that the research area is perceived as having excellent potential.

Recruitment and training

Recruitment to the research area is linked directly to planning and strategy, although it seems unlikely, as the self-assessment document claims, that there are no figures to indicate whether or not researchers are recruited from within or outside Norway.

Networking

There is active international research collaboration at the institutional level, with projects listing collaborating partners from more than 20 countries. The faculty also has an advantageous sabbatical system whereby academics are expected to spend their sabbatical outside Norway. This is unusual and commendable. According to the report, UiT benefits from recruiting international expertise, although this is ‘challenging’ in the current strategy period. A more detailed explanation for this would have been appreciated.

Impact on teaching

Links between research and teaching are outlined in some detail, and disciplines actively emphasise how teaching and research are connected. Students are involved in research from MA level up, for example, through being hired as research assistants, and MA funds are made available every year for fieldwork, archival studies and conferences related to dissertations. At PhD level, many students join large research projects. Considerable detail is provided in the self-assessment document on some of the challenges of ‘optimising the interplay of teaching and research’, such as the potential narrowness of research-related teaching or that teaching does not have the same ‘prestige’ as research. Through the establishment of a Writing Centre, the research process will be integrated into teaching via the teaching of language and writing tools.

Other societal impact

As for other units of assessment, UiTHSL indicates societal impact via the description of a case study, in this instance ‘War/Game’, an international research group analysing the impact of war games. Although there is some promising activity, including some media attention and national dissemination of results, this project is promising, but not especially advanced.

Overall assessment

This is a small unit that appears to believe in itself, and that aims to grow stronger in the future. The self-assessment document is honest about some of the weaknesses and threats, such as the intense competition for research funding. There is some evidence of international research collaboration and

international excellence, and there are good long-term plans in place. The documentation could have been clearer in parts, although it is sufficiently detailed in some parts.

Feedback

The area of research is small, but it functions well in some aspects. One highlighted concern is research income capture (the dependence on Norwegian state funding is marked); another is PhD and postdoc recruitment. Two research groups are mentioned; the other research group should perhaps be prioritised in future. Equal opportunities are discussed exclusively in relation to gender.

3.6 University of Agder, Faculty of Humanities and Education (UiA)

The Faculty of Humanities and Education at the University of Agder (UiA) has four departments, which all the study programmes are organised under. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of the Faculty of Humanities and Education decreased from NOK 38.6 million (2013) to NOK 32.9 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure increased, however, from 7.4% to 12.2% in the same period. The 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 Media Studies, five researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The institution has submitted one research area publication, but no impact case studies. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The Faculty of Humanities and Education at UiA (UiA for short in the following) covers a range of classic humanistic subjects, including what appears to be a relatively small Media Studies component. It is stated at the outset that the institution 'is currently developing a new strategy plan including a small set of priority areas', which thus do not appear to be in place yet. Similarly, being involved in larger external projects, e.g., in the context of the EU's Horizon 2020, is presented as a future intention rather than a current practice. The self-assessment, further voices the common difficulties of securing time and resources for research, partly due to teaching workloads. This is in spite of the fact that the MULTIKUL priority area produced good outcomes, as indicated by the number and variety of publications. It is not immediately apparent how this and other research activities relate specifically to the field of Media Studies, its traditions and research agendas. Overall, UiA does appear to require the new strategy plan mentioned in the data in order to support its future success.

Resources

The resources available for research at UiA, including for Media Studies, appear to be relatively limited. This is indicated by comments on the limited time available to staff for research, due in part to the scope of funding allocated to 'new' universities. This is also suggested by the limited external funding for research at the faculty overall – which, in the SWOT matrix, makes securing such funding 'an urgent priority'.

Research production and quality

The background data indicate, first of all, rather a small group of researchers in Media Studies at UiA. This is also indicated by the lack of any research groups in this area. Secondly, the bibliometric data indicate a correspondingly limited number of publication points. In addition, the percentage of Level 2 publications is low, as is the proportion of publications in English (from the 20 listed publications, only four appear to be in English). The publication submitted as part of the institutional self-assessment is an informative, but rather basic evaluation – in Norwegian – of initiatives to promote professional journalistic practices in an international conflict zone.

Recruitment and training

The self-assessment notes a persistent tendency to recruit people from Norway to UiA. It further notes that PhD students tend not to spend substantial periods of study abroad. It also notes the absence of any guidance for PhD students regarding career paths. UiA offers four PhD programmes, but it is unclear to what extent these programmes address (aspects of) Media Studies.

Networking

The data available suggest very little involvement in international research networks. There is hardly any reference to specific collaborations except in instances such as the participation of foreign scholars (Professor II) in a research priority (MULTIKUL).

Impact on teaching

The self-assessment explicitly notes a 'lack of correlation between study programmes and staff research fields'. Furthermore, the SWOT matrix, indicates that staff find it difficult to have 'extensive student contact' because of generally high teaching loads. However, the student surveys indicate a satisfaction level that is slightly above average.

Other societal impact

The data available suggest little orientation towards collaboration with partners in various practice domains outside the university. Exceptions include popular science lectures and 'media publications' deriving from MULTIKUL, and dissemination relating to religion as part of political discourse.

Overall assessment

In the present context, UiA comes across as a classic humanities research institution, emphasising teaching in traditional topics, in part due to its funding structure. As a research entity, both its resources and its outputs are limited, at least in the area of Media Studies. Initiatives to develop international networking or external partnerships are not detailed in the available data. A strategic plan, as mentioned in the self-assessment, seems an important next step.

Feedback

The best advice from a review perspective would seem to be to reiterate the need for a strategy, to be backed up by leadership, organisational initiatives and decisions on where to focus necessarily limited research resources. The MULTIKUL priority comes across in the data as an accomplishment to be modelled and repeated, which will presumably require concerted efforts by leadership and scholars.

3.7 Lillehammer University College (HiL)

Lillehammer University College (HiL) is organised in five faculties (Education and Social Work, Economics and Organisational Studies, Social Science, Television Production and the Norwegian Film School) and all its academic activities are located on one campus situated in Lillehammer. According to the institutional self-assessment, HiL's expenditure relevant to the panel increased from NOK 3.3 million (2013) to NOK 4.2 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure also increased from 16% to 40% in the same period. The only sources of external funding are public Norwegian sources (the RCN not included).

Within the research area of Media Studies, nine researchers were listed for HUMEVAL in one research group (Film and Television Studies). The institution did not submit any research area publications or impact case studies. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

Lillehammer University College (HiL) is a smallish university college (or university of applied science) with five faculties, 355 staff members and 4,900 students. The institution aims to provide research-based education and it particularly wishes to serve public sector organisations. In recent years, HiL has adopted a more professionalised leadership policy with an appointed rector (in contrast to an elected one) and vice-rectors. The deans of each faculty report directly to the rector. HiL recognises relevant national strategies and aims to apply them at the institutional level. From 1 January 2017, the two university colleges HiL and Hedmark University College (HiHm) merged, creating a new institution called Innlandet University College (Høgskolen i Innlandet).

The Department of Film and Television Studies is under the Faculty of Social Sciences, although there was discussion a few years ago of a possible merger with the Film and Television School. The interview in October made it abundantly clear that the Film School does not wish to merge at any point with Media Studies, while the merger with HiHm is going ahead to create Inland University College. The research at the department is organised as research projects, which are mostly initiated by researchers, except for a few RCN-funded projects. The faculty does not currently have a research strategy but it follows HiL's general strategic priorities, one of which is Audiovisual Media.

Resources

The resources specifically allocated to the department are not clear from the documents available, and, over the past three years, the department appears to have been awarded no external funding by the RCN. This is glossed over in the SWOT Analysis in which a drop in RCN or H2020 funding is perceived to be only 'moderately' likely, but with 'serious' consequences. At the institutional level, expenditure has increased significantly, both for research personnel and in external research funding. However, there is no separate financial information relating to the Department of Film and Television Studies. Likewise, there is no information available on the number of research and teaching staff at the department. Of the 22 annual PhD fellowships allocated to HiL by the Ministry of Education and Research, only 1-2 are allocated to the PhD programme in Audiovisual Media.

Research production and quality

Based on publication statistics provided by NIFU, the research area's academic productivity is slightly below the national average. The data specify that the department's researchers accrued 42 publication points, and 43% of publications are published in English and 18% in Level 2 publications.

According to the self-assessment report, staff members are also active in artistic research, the results of which are difficult to assess based on the given indicators. The report only mentions two recent research projects (Television in a Digital Environment, 2005-2008, and Success in the Private Film and Television Industries, 2013-2017; the latter in cooperation with British, Danish and Dutch partners), but there is no mention of their outcomes. Additionally, the report mentions three research areas (young people's media literacy; media in experience economy/creative industries framework; media within political science) but there is no indication of research funding or publications.

Recruitment and training

As the self-assessment document reveals, no tenured positions have been announced in the area of Film and Television Studies since 2011. The department does not have a specific recruitment policy or any plans for staff members' career paths. The only regular recruitment practice concerns the PhD programme that has one to two PhD fellowships per year. Other forms of recruitment depend on externally funded projects. Based on the report, there is no specific policy for staff training. Tenured staff members can apply for one semester's research leave, but there is no regular rotation for this. Funds are available for travel and other expenses for those on research leave. The ratio of associate professors to professors is 60% to 20%, which the self-assessment document states is high compared to other university colleges. HiL adopts a gender equality policy for a four-year period at a time, which is intended to promote equality at all levels. However, there is no further mention of gender and age balance. Similarly, although the self-assessment document states that HiL has 'an increased number of international recruitments', no details are given.

Networking

The department, in line with HiL as a whole, is seeking to strengthen its international perspective through publications in academic journals and other activities. Certain research groups at HiL are given financial and practical support to develop competitive projects for submission to Horizon 2020, although precise details were not given. All PhD students are encouraged to study abroad for at least three months. The department has a joint PhD programme in Audiovisual Media with NTNU. The ongoing research project 'Success in the Private Film and Television Industries' (2013-2016, RCN) has partners from Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands. Other than this, no specific information on networking is available.

Impact on teaching

The research-active members of the department teach the study programmes Film and Television Studies (BA+MA) and Cultural Management (BA). In addition, researchers also lecture on the study programmes offered by the Faculty of Television Production. According to the report, MA students can be involved in research projects, but there is no specific policy for this. Co-publishing by supervisors and students is also encouraged. For professors and associate professors, dividing hours between teaching, research and administration is beneficial in relation to maintaining both a research and a teaching profile.

Other societal impact

The report mentions a publication 'To knurrende lover' that has facilitated the Ministry of Culture's policy report 'Kulturutredningen' (2013). The report otherwise lists public activities by researchers such as publications in Level 2 journals; expert presentations in the media/press; participation in public debates and as speakers for wider audiences; working as consultants for film companies; bringing together media professionals and academics etc. However, no clear indicators were applied, which makes it difficult to assess the impact.

Overall assessment

Lillehammer University College (HiL) is a small institution of higher education with a relatively well-structured organisation and leadership overall. Its proclaimed aim of following national research strategies seems still to be being implemented. This is visible in publications, research projects and external funding. Without substantial new resources and clear academic leadership, the department will not be able to improve the quality and quantity of its research. The interview in October offered a bleak assessment of the Department of Film and Television Studies' future, unless it diversifies into Cultural Studies, for example. The institution's self-assessment surmises that the department is 'unlikely to survive on its own', so our recommendation would be to urgently investigate potential mergers.

Feedback

The Department of Film and Television Studies needs substantial new resources both in terms of funding and new recruitments in order for its research to achieve a good national and, eventually, international standard. More detail in nearly all of the assessment categories would have aided the evaluation process.

3.8 NLA University College (NLA)

NLA University College is a private university college offering studies in a variety of areas from four different campuses in Bergen, Oslo and Kristiansand. R&D is carried out in different departments, and NLA carries out research and offers study programmes in a wide range of research areas in the Humanities. According to the institutional self-assessment, NLA's total expenditure increased from NOK 171.2 million (2013) to NOK 190.6 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure also increased from 2.8% to 4.4% in the same period. The external funding comes solely from public Norwegian sources (the RCN not included).

Within the research area of Media Studies, 18 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. According to the self-assessment these researchers are organised in three research groups (Global Journalism, Evangelical Missiology & Mission Praxis, and Children, the Media & Worldview). The institution submitted two research area publications, but no impact case studies. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project. At the panel interview, NLA representatives wanted to withdraw one research group (Evangelical Missiology & Mission Praxis and Children) from the evaluation, due to a mistake in the preparation of the self-assessment material. However, the panel felt that a major change in this phase of the evaluation process would be unfair for other participant institutions, and decided to proceed with the original NLA self-evaluation.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The self-assessment makes it clear that priorities are focused on teacher training. There is no mention of Media Studies in the institutional goals. Research is not guided by 'formal processes of implementation of national or international research policy documents at institutional level' and research is very much left up to individuals. It should be added that a number of activities at NLA, including some referred to as media research, appear to be support functions for missionary activities, which fall outside the remit of this evaluation.

Resources

The self-assessment fails to separate R&D funding from overall funding. There are no research sabbaticals, and staff are heavily involved in educational and administrative tasks.

Research production and quality

The staff achieved 34 publication points, with only 11% at Level 2, and 44% of the people included in the assessment had 0 publication points. (The removal of the aforementioned research group would have changed the result significantly.) There is no PhD programme, although staff are encouraged to undertake PhDs at external institutions and two have done so over this period. The publication provided in the self-assessment is not a scholarly publication, but a set of policy statements on strategies for advancing the interests of a particular Christian movement.

Recruitment and training

There is a policy of using PhD places to help internal candidates to qualify to teach at the institution (two in three years), and two members of staff are currently on research leave to help them qualify for promotion. This indicates that some effort is being made internally to improve the research capacity of staff. NLA does not have PhD programs, and doctoral candidates employed by NLA are enrolled in programs at other universities. However, it was made clear during the interview with the

institution that training for journalism lecturers would not necessarily involve research training and might not lead to a PhD.

Networking

Staff are engaged in international research collaboration in Kosovo and Ethiopia, as well as in Uganda. They are also said to be involved in research partnerships with other institutions, but no substantial information was provided to make it possible to evaluate this aspect.

Impact on teaching

A Global Journalism research group is connected to the MA in Global Journalism. This indicates that teaching staff are encouraged to both undertake research and use it directly in their teaching and in support of MA students. At BA level, there is mention of work on downsizing in media houses, and an article supporting this was provided in the connection of the panel interview. This is said to feed directly into journalism degrees. Perhaps surprisingly, students are relatively well satisfied with their research experience. The average score for BA students is 3.2 and 3.4 for MA students.

Other societal impact

The institution submitted no societal impact cases for review even though its involvement in the NORAD-supported project 'Building capacity for a changing media environment in Uganda' would presumably qualify. There are no data on which to base an assessment of impact.

Overall assessment

There seems to be little institutional interest in media research, and there is little evidence of any research effort. The institution clearly prioritises teaching and pedagogy. Given a number of statements in the self-assessment, such as, 'The other main branch of media research is communication of faith and worldviews, including Christian apologetics', it is not clear that the activities at NLA are in line with the prevailing international understanding of academic Media and Communication research, which is the remit of the present panel.

Feedback

The self-assessment is very brief and leads the assessors to believe that research is a very low priority in the area of Media Studies. Journalism lecturers appear to be involved in research groups both internationally and nationally, but insufficient information makes it impossible to assess its quality and potential impact.

3.9 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 increased from NOK 179.5 million (2013) to NOK 209.7 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure decreased, however, from 8.4% to 6.9% in the same period. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by other public Norwegian sources.

Within the research area of Media Studies, 27 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: three research groups (Individual Exposure in Journalism, Framing Narratives of War in the Journalistic and Cultural Field, and Journalism, Globalization & Climate Change), one impact case study and one research area publication. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

There is a national strategy to improve and extend research within the constraints of an institution where teachers have higher teaching loads than at the older universities. Since 2013, a strategy has been pursued to establish research groups as priority areas, including five groups in the area of Media Studies. There is no PhD programme for Media Studies however. The emphasis in the department is on: 'research with a direct impact on professional media'. However, there is little evidence of a strategy, for example, to encourage the development of research-active practitioners. There is no fixed system for sabbatical leave; instead, staff are encouraged to arrange teaching loads to maximise research time. The 7% allowed for administration in the overall calculation is derisory, and this inevitably means that research time is reduced even further.

Resources

There are serious resource constraints, both in terms of basic allocations and external funding. The institution attracts little funding – between 8.4% and 6.9% – from external sources. Teaching loads, again, appear to be rather heavy, with little adjustment for research. The self-assessment draws attention to discrimination against 'applied science' institutions with respect to funding. Here, an institution with limited resources, most of which were allocated to other disciplines, still managed to do very well in terms of publications and external collaboration.

Research production and quality

In the absence of much institutional support or a PhD programme, the research effort in the area of Media Studies is considerable. It has the third highest number of publication points of all the institutions and 19% of publications are at Level 2. Several long-term research programmes have produced strong publications records, especially in international and intercultural communication. The publication presented as part of the institutional report is a critical review of previous research on online journalism, rather than an original theoretical or empirical contribution.

Recruitment and training

There is little information on this aspect of Media Studies, but (as was confirmed by the panel interviews) staff appear to be mainly recruited from the industry. As noted, there is no PhD

programme in Media Studies. There is a reasonable gender balance in the research groups, but no information on the gender balance among professors etc. Only 11% of research staff failed to produce publications, which suggests a research culture that encourages participation and the development of staff as researchers.

Networking

The data document extensive research networks and connections across the world, especially in the areas of international and intercultural communication, and with a particularly topical emphasis on the Global South.

Impact on teaching

The emphasis on practical research, integrated in curricula as laid out in Attachment 4 and combined with effective international networking, provides very fertile ground for research to have an impact on teaching. This is borne out by almost the highest MA student scores for personal satisfaction with research and development work of all the institutions. However, the institution appears to accept that 'students are in general not that interested in research' and there appears to be a low level of student satisfaction with knowledge of research methods among BA students. The institution could challenge the students rather than accepting their lack of interest.

Other societal impact

The level of public engagement should be commended. Several research groups are actively involved in public outreach and engagement – from war and peace journalism to software development for risk and emergency communication. The impact case highlights HiOA's strong position in climate change communication, which has generated public attention and social impact by addressing both 'specialists (UNESCO, scientific institutions, trade unions, NGOs) and [...] general citizen forums locally and transnationally'.

Overall assessment

The overall impression is that this institution is fortunate to have attracted some very energetic staff members who have also attracted external funding. On the other hand, there seems to be a lack of overall strategy and little in the way of planning for future initiatives. The staff should be congratulated on their energy and commitment. Whether this is in fact backed up by leadership, for example in the form of explicit support for practitioner staff transitioning into research, is not apparent in the report.

Feedback

The staff should be congratulated on their efforts to maintain trans-world connections, a high profile in international research networks, a high publication score relative to their funding level and high rates of participation in publication. However, this research effort does not appear to be encouraged or supported by any long-term plan for supporting research or recruiting people with research interests. In particular, the department could consider an organised sabbatical system and perhaps a mentoring system for junior staff in order to encourage a new generation of researchers. It is a matter of some concern that the report dismisses student interest in research. Media students may not often go on to do academic research (few students do in any discipline), but it is important that they learn from staff who are active in and encourage research. A dismissive attitude to the need for research will probably influence student attitudes and could hamper staff development.

3.10 Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO)

Established in 1945, Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) has two research centres: the Centre of Design Research and the Oslo Centre for Critical Architectural Studies (OCCAS). According to the institutional self-assessment, AHO's total expenditure increased from NOK 163.7 million (2013) to NOK 178.1 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure also increased from 9.1% to 9.8% in the same period. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by private Norwegian sources. Some modest EU funding is documented in 2013 (NOK 264,000).

AHO listed six researchers for HUMEVAL within the research area of Media Studies in one research group (Design Digital Humanities). The following data were submitted by the institution: one impact case study and one research area publication. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

AHO is an institution of research and higher learning focusing on architecture and design. An explicit strategy of instituting research institutes/centres, along with participation in international collaborative projects, is presented as a primary means of promoting the quality and relevance of research. It is less clear from the data available how different disciplinary sources and traditions feed into the joint efforts. In the case of Media Studies and the overlapping area of digital humanities, AHO refers to a number of familiar, general themes, while the alignment of AHO's activities with specific current research agendas in these areas is not immediately apparent.

Resources

Whereas AHO departments and projects provide the frameworks for research, the fact sheet indicates comparatively little funding for research personnel, compared to other personnel and running costs. This may be due to the close relationship between scholarship, education and applied projects in AHO's activities. However, it raises the question of what scale, scope and focus can be attained in ongoing research efforts. Some additional external funding has been secured, especially from the RCN, similar to the funding available for research personnel. Still, since this amount appears to cover AHO as a whole; the funding for individual initiatives, including in Media Studies, would appear rather limited.

Research production and quality

The data bear witness to a wide range of initiatives and considerable success in establishing collaborations with both international colleagues and local partners in various domains of practice, in addition to a substantial publication record. Bibliometric data indicate a good percentage of Level 2 publications, a strong proportion of publications in English, and 100% of scholars with four or more publications / publication points during the period examined. The publication submitted as part of the institutional self-assessment is a basic, brief, but interesting and reflective, essay on how to design for greater transparency in networked cities.

Recruitment and training

The self-assessment document refers to an explicit aim to recruit people from other institutions, nationally and internationally. The staffing of the research group under consideration by the present

panel suggests an intake of some non-Norwegian researchers. In addition, AHO has a PhD programme enabling local training and interfaces between young and established scholars.

Networking

The description of international research collaborations suggests excellent initiatives as well as outcomes in terms of establishing and maintaining networks, including as part of funded projects and through exchanges.

Impact on teaching

AHO emphasises the integration of research and teaching, noting ‘that students, courses, and ongoing research projects are closely linked.’ Although the data do not elaborate on the nature of such an impact, the description of teaching strategies and the links to professional practice suggest day-to-day integration in this respect. The student surveys indicate a satisfaction level slightly above average (the relevant programmes are on the margins of Panel 8’s remit). At the PhD level, AHO is a member of Nordic networks that are developing pedagogical approaches in the area.

Other societal impact

In addition to publications and candidates, AHO is engaged in various projects devoted to applying insights from research to real-world problems. One example mentioned in the data is a Centre for Connected Care that addresses the public healthcare sector. Another example detailed in the impact case (YOUrban) represents a full-scale success in terms of scholarly output, collaboration with the field of practice and future perspectives for collaboration.

Overall assessment

AHO comes across as a well-established interdisciplinary institution, emphasising professional training and engagement with the field of practice. Research, naturally, is oriented toward issues in this domain, and AHO has solid international networks feeding into collaborative projects. From the perspective of the present panel, activities addressing Media and Communication are subordinate to other theoretical and applied considerations, even though the data document a strong publication record in Media Studies and an applied project (YOUrban) that has been successful in both scholarly and social terms – against the odds the wider institutional framework would indicate.

Feedback

AHO has a clear and explicit strategy, and has established research institutes/centres as focal points. To advance that strategy, and to secure more resources for research personnel, it would be relevant to consider, firstly, an even stronger focus on one or a few research topics. Given its professional-practice profile, AHO research might be better served in the short term, by such a common focus. Secondly, for the purposes of the implementation and communication of its strategy, AHO might wish to clarify how its focal points relate to established fields and disciplines: In what sense is and will AHO be pursuing ‘digital humanities?’

3.11 Volda University College (HVO)

Volda University College (HVO) is organised in four faculties of which the Faculty of Humanities and Education is the largest. According to the institutional self-assessment, HVO's total expenditure of the Faculty of Humanities and Education increased from NOK 58.7 million (2013) to NOK 66.2 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure decreased, however, from 15% to 12% in the same period. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by other public Norwegian sources. Some modest EU funding is documented of around NOK 1 million per year.

Within the research area of Media Studies, 22 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The institution has submitted two impact case studies but no research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Organisation, leadership and strategy

HVO is a long-established university college organised around four faculties. The link between the research area and the institution is difficult to discern from the self-assessment data. Most data concerns the college level rather than the area itself. At the college level, an R&D Committee is responsible for the strategy for R&D activity. The main objectives revolve around developing staff competence and strengthening regional ties. The focus areas of research are clear. Journalism: new media, media ethics and freedom of speech and democracy. Media and journalism, cultural encounters, professional practices are all relevant.

In the self-assessment, the small R&D support organisation and the lack of an R&D strategy for the Humanities are recognised as weaknesses. The organisation is described as effective, but this is difficult to judge from the self-assessment. A new R&D strategy (2015-2018) has been drawn up to overcome current issues. The interview suggested that the media research group will be strengthened in the future (e.g. by regrouping various sub groups in a Faculty of Media and a new media building). This is aspirational, however, and the current strategy where 'everyone who wishes so can call themselves a research group' needs more vision.

Resources

The self-assessment reports that HVO provides access to a large number of resources in the library, to special rooms, and media and culture equipment of high quality, although keeping the latter up to date is costly. The fact sheet indicates a steady growth in the resources available to the area in the three years under analysis. The core expenditure is on research personnel, with much smaller amounts spent on other personnel and running costs. The proportion of its total expenditure from external funding has decreased slightly over the period, but it still represents 12% of total funding, which is sound for a small faculty, but could still be improved. Most of the external funding comes from Norwegian sources. International funding is restricted to EU funding, and although the amount has doubled over the period, the sum remains low compared to external funding nationally. Some growth in terms of externally funded research projects, especially international projects, is recommended, as well as diversification in terms of sources of international funding, since it remains limited to EU funding. All in all, however, given the scale and under-resourcing of the department, the level of external funding is fair.

Research production and quality

The bibliometric analysis reveals that the number of publication points per academic staff member is quite low compared to other institutions under scrutiny. More generally, HVO is below the average on all key indicators, namely the proportion of Level 2 publications, publications in English, journal articles and staff members with four or more publication points. This rather contradicts the claim that high quality, and increasingly international, research is important. The research example provided is solid, but not outstanding in international terms. Remarkably, there are no research groups either. However research groups are planned, and this could have been a path to growth had it been set in motion much earlier.

Recruitment and training

The self-assessment describes some goals for improving recruitment and training. The first one is internationalisation, with a few specific measures, e.g. supporting and enabling PhD students to apply to institutions abroad; teaching in English; and providing strong support for individual international networking. There is a lower proportion of women (quantified for PhD graduates and professors), but the self-assessment asserts that gender balance is an objective (as is promoting diversity). There were not many PhD graduates over the period, and most of them graduated in 2012/2013. The self-assessment suggests that this can be explained by the lack of a separate PhD programme in the Humanities. There is not much information about career paths.

Networking

The self-assessment reports various networking efforts and tools, but mainly at the regional level, for example with Møreforsking, a regional research institute. A few examples are given at the national level. The interdisciplinary research forum on Protest Movements and the research group on Journalism, Democracy and Digital Aesthetics (notably 'Cold War and the Media') are fine examples in terms of research. In terms of education, the students are also involved in a wide range of student exchange programmes. Cooperation with Japan, China, India and most European countries is mentioned, but this is not well-evidenced. Good industry ties also provide networking opportunities for both staff and students. There is a plan for internationalisation. The interview indicated that Media Studies collaborates internationally on mobile media research, which is good, but there was no evidence of a more structural vision for internationalisation.

Impact on teaching

The self-assessment claims that R&D is an important foundation for teaching. BA and MA students are encouraged to participate in R&D projects, as illustrated in the example of the research group's contribution to MA and BA programmes. Students benefit from lower than average class sizes and a higher share of professors among the staff, although the overall share of personnel with doctoral degrees is lower than at other institutions. This is probably due to a focus on practice-oriented teaching and the requirement for teachers with industry experience. However, this has a negative impact on the interplay between research and teaching. It is promising to see that the faculty shows a clear commitment to improving this aspect and they particularly mention the importance of connecting theory and practice. On the other hand, the interview did not really demonstrate much vision in this respect, adding little more than that 'there is a plan to create tighter links'.

Other societal impact

Two impact cases were provided. Case 1 on Media and Protest illustrates how the area aims to make an impact at the international level, although failure to secure EU or national funding is reported. Case 2 on Situate Technology well illustrates one of the current impacts, which is on local

stakeholders, here through a close relationship with the Norwegian media industry. More generally, the societal impact reported in the self-assessment is quite vague.

Overall assessment

There is a lack of specific information about the area, which did not help the panel's assessment of it (rather than HVO in general). Overall, apart from its small size and strong industrial regional links, the area/HVO does not display any clear, distinctive qualities. There are also many problems (lack of internationalisation, gender imbalance, lack of PhD graduates etc.). However, the area /HVO appears to be aware of these problems and aim to remedy them, which was also apparent in the interviews in terms of 'professor grants', more female professors and allocating research time. However, these appear to be scattered initiatives that lack a common strategic framework.

Feedback

The area shows a positive commitment to research-led teaching and good industry links, but there is little evidence of positive outcomes so far. HVO's priority areas are staff competence and regional ties. More effort could be put into other areas that are much weaker, for example PhDs and internationalisation (which is not well-evidenced). A sign of hope for internationalisation is the degree of internationalisation among students. But this could be combined with greater internationalisation in research collaboration and in terms of funding.

4 Assessment of research groups

4.1 AHO – Design Digital Humanities

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This research group is an established entity with multiple national collaborations and international networks; it spans two institutes and two centres at AHO. It has also received substantial funding from national as well as international sources. In future, one aim is to secure EU funding. At the same time, the self-assessment notes that relatively more resources and infrastructure are needed at AHO for the activities characteristic of this research group. The research group's research strategy is a little more difficult to grasp, in part because of very broad formulation of research questions and conceptual complexity in parts of the self-assessment. At least from the perspective of the field of Media Studies and the overlapping area of Digital Humanities, the text, while referring to certain familiar interdisciplinary themes, appears to wish to stake out and pursue its own relatively self-contained approach of practice-based inquiry.

Research production and quality

While the bibliometric evidence does not specify output at research group level, the CVs of the group document solid publication records for some members, including in non-academic genres and formats. Academic publications have appeared in a range of international journals and conferences. In terms of publication levels 1 and 2, the quality of the publications submitted is mixed, however. On the one hand, they include an informative and nuanced account of iterative design processes and a Master's level art-historical analysis of touristic landscapes. On the other hand, they also include quite basic theoretical discussions and an experimental essay whose rhetorical style gets in the way of communicating its message.

Recruitment and training

The self-assessment describes various initiatives for training and otherwise involving PhD students in and through projects, including local mentoring and study visits to international collaborators. In addition, the institutional self-assessment of AHO notes that the institution has its own PhD programme, which also provides a formal framework for doctoral training.

Networking

The research group's networks are strong, both at the national and the international level. This is apparent through the collaborations described in the data, including funded projects, through exchanges and in publications. Moreover, members of the research group are active on conference committees and on editorial boards.

Impact on teaching

Research in this group feeds into teaching in a variety of ways, especially at the MA and PhD levels. Both the organisation of teaching in studios and a close integration with professional practice indicate mutual feedback and inspiration between students and researchers.

Overall assessment

This group is a well-published and internationally very well-connected community of researchers, emphasising practice-based inquiry at the intersection between academic scholarship and professional practice. As such, the group presents itself as a successful entity with particular strength in international research. At the same time, in the context of a scholarly evaluation, the present reviewers have some reservations about the scope and quality of its research. The publications submitted for this evaluation range from only fair to good quality; in particular, the theoretical items leave something to be desired in terms of conceptual precision and clarity of argumentation. When the broad and somewhat grand ambitions that are stated in the self-assessment are compared with some of the publications, questions can be raised about the proposed profile of the group: how does it relate to established interdisciplinary fields such as Digital Humanities and/or disciplines such as Media Studies, and what distinctive, but necessarily delimited contributions could this group make?

Feedback

The present reviewers would therefore encourage the group to specify and clarify its profile with a view to the future, in part to secure more funding from the RCN and other sources. Through a stronger and more explicit focus on selected research questions, as also addressed in a number of other fields and disciplines, this group might be better able to underpin its distinctive contributions to theory and practice, and to engage in dialogue with other theoreticians and practitioners about these contributions.

4.2 HiL – Film and Television Studies

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The research group consists of 11 members located at HiL, of whom four are full professors and one is a PhD student. The research group was established to research Norwegian and Scandinavian Film and Television Studies. The group has a leader whose role and responsibility are not clarified in the self-assessment report. The main function of the group is to support its members in external research projects and grant applications. Although the group does not have a common publication strategy, its members are expected to achieve a minimum of three DBH points measured in three-year intervals. Lillehammer University College supports research groups in budgeting project proposals and manages finances on behalf of the projects. No other forms of support are mentioned in the self-assessment report.

Research production and quality

The research made available for assessment indicates that this is an active and academically stimulating group that covers a wide range of research areas, including new technologies; crime

genres; health and lifestyle television; World War II newsreels; regionalism and film policy; films on Arctic exploration and documentary film. This demonstrates a clear commitment to diversity and breadth of interest. There are several excellent publications, especially in the field of cinema studies, with articles also being published in top international academic journals. Much of the book-based research was also of a high standard. Research productivity was high in some cases, but lower in others.

Recruitment and training

The self-assessment report emphasises the importance of PhD students to the research group, and details the procedure for their recruitment and career development. It is stated that vacancies are advertised internationally and that there is an active recruitment policy. However, the research group hosts only one PhD student, and there is no mention of any plans to recruit more in the near future. Other aspects of recruitment and training are not discussed.

Networking

Domestically, the research group cooperates with NTNU and the University of Oslo. Internationally, the group is involved in an ongoing research project ‘Success in the Private Film and Television Industries’ (2013-2016, funded by the RCN), which has partners from the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands. Other than this, the self-assessment document provides no specific information. However, the research outputs submitted for assessment attest – as in other areas in this research group – to varying engagement with international research concerns and projects. The outputs found to be ‘excellent’ were, perhaps predictably, those that spoke most clearly to an international readership and audience. This does not mean, by any means that they focused on international texts or subjects, but that they engaged vigorously with international debates in their fields.

Another form of networking with a more direct societal impact is the national conference for practitioners from the television and film industries, which the research group has organised for more than ten years. According to the self-assessment report, cooperation also includes connecting with industry members and policymakers in other ways, including participation in the National Centre for Creative Industries.

Impact on teaching

There is no specific information on how the group’s research contributes to teaching. The information that is given is clearly generic to all teaching at HiL. Tenured staff teach 50%, but how this is related to the group’s work is not explained.

Overall assessment

The research group aims to become the leading source of academic knowledge on Norwegian Film and Television, and, based on its publications and research strategy, it clearly has the potential to achieve this aim. However, the group’s membership is heavily skewed to professors, and the number of junior academics (PhD students and postdocs) is very low, which is not promising for the future. Additionally, it is not easy to see how the research group’s two-sided profile (film and television history, and film and television production) can produce a consistent strategy.

Feedback

Some of the group’s research is excellent, although the submission would have benefited from a clearer research strategy. The group needs a more balanced combination of senior and established scholars with early-career researchers and PhD students. There might be a potential for dividing the

group into two smaller groups with different profiles, one concentrating more on film and television history and the other on production.

4.3 HIOASAM – Individual Exposure in Journalism

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The research group presents itself as a recently established and very motivated group, which works collaboratively to ensure quality in its research. So far, however, it mainly comprises fairly inexperienced researchers with relatively low levels of research outputs, and it has not attracted any substantial external funding despite applications and plans for more in the future. The self-assessment by the group refers to institutional support in, for example, application processes, but the group is not mentioned in the institutional self-assessment, which indicates a rather low level of institutional visibility.

One issue is the group's title and its defining motto: 'stronger individualisation and subjective presence in journalism'. While this may be a statement of intent, most of the work submitted is more concerned with framing and textual analysis.

There is no PhD programme, but several of the group members are engaged in PhD research, and some supervise PhDs.

Research production and quality

The publications submitted are a mixture of strong and less successful pieces. The work is not, on the whole, complex methodologically, but most is solid and relevant, and a valuable contribution to journalism research. Much of the work (according to the CVs) is also published in highly ranked international journals, which is quite an achievement for this sort of research group.

Recruitment and training

The research group makes a point of working collaboratively and sharing drafts of papers, which is probably responsible in part for the high participation rate in joint publications and the generally good quality of work. The proportion of female members of the group is 35%, which seems low. Recruitment through contact with local students is mentioned as one strategy. It appears that several group members are themselves involved in PhD research or have relatively recently completed PhDs.

Networking

The group has set in motion national and international networks for future research. While international recruitment is a priority for the institution as a whole, it may be more difficult for a department that requires lecturers to teach journalism practice, presumably in Norwegian.

Impact on teaching

Members of the group are engaged in teaching and assess their research as 'highly relevant' to teaching, as would be expected in a department that combines research and education in professional practice. The pragmatic approach to journalism research demonstrated in some of the samples of work seems useful in teaching journalism as a practice.

Overall assessment

The general impression is of a very engaged group of academics who support one another in consolidating a coherent research group. This is a commendable approach by what appears to be a poorly funded institution with a largely practical approach to journalism.

Feedback

The collaborative approach to research seems to be paying off in terms of quality and level of participation. However, the description and titles of the group's research activities do not seem to fully reflect the work that has been produced. While a Humanities approach is perfectly commendable, most of the research included seems to be more concerned with the broader social context of journalism, which should perhaps be made more explicit in the group's goals. One challenge for the future will be to secure external funding, which will also require institutional support.

4.4 HiOASAM – Journalism, globalization and climate change

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This research group is a well-established entity with multiple national collaborations and international networks. It has received solid funding from national public sources, and it has an explicit publication strategy. In future, one aim is to join applications for EU funding. This has been accomplished despite limited institutional strategies or departmental incentives to promote the quantity and quality of research. It should be noted, though, that the delimitation and, hence, the profile of the group is not entirely clear in the submitted data. On the one hand, the group's research on climate change and environmental communication, in general was strong. On the other hand, several of the publications submitted, as well as the CVs of participating researchers, are weakly related or unrelated to this focus. Depending on the scope defined by the research group, this will call for different strategies in terms of organisational development, funding and publications.

Research production and quality

While the bibliometric data do not specify output at the level of research groups, the group's CVs bear witness to a strong publication record; several members of the group have been and remain highly productive. The quality of the publications submitted for assessment is also generally high, spanning theory development and empirical studies, and quantitative as well as qualitative work. Publications have appeared in key international journals.

Recruitment and training

The training of PhD students and the recruitment of researchers to the group are noted as potential problems. The department in question has no PhD programme, but several members of the group serve as PhD advisors. In addition, collaborations and networks offer means of recruitment and training, both for junior scholars and for the group itself.

Networking

The research group's networks are especially strong in environmental communication research, both at the national and the international level. This is evident from the publications, conference activities and various collaborations reported in the self-assessment. Networking beyond the community of environmental communication researchers is not covered, however. In contrast to some other research groups in HUMEVAL, the data from this group include an impact case over and above the impact case considered for HiOASAM in the area assessment. While the impact case documents strong contributions to both global research networks and input to the field of practice, it seems unclear whether and how these accomplishments should be considered at the research group level.

Impact on teaching

The self-assessment notes that research feeds into teaching at the BA, MA and PhD levels, as is common at research universities internationally. It also notes the participation of some students in research projects.

Overall assessment

This group presents itself as an established, well-published, and comparatively well-funded community of researchers, with environmental communication as a special strong point. In this regard, the group can be said to punch above its weight, and to deliver more than might be expected within its institutional framework. In view of the data submitted, however, its profile is somewhat unclear from a reviewer's perspective: is it an environmental communication research group with some affiliated activities in the domains of globalisation and journalism generally? Or are these latter domains considered equally important, and, if so, far less successful components of the group's activities? If this is the case, it would seem important to define a strategy to promote more activities on globalisation and/or journalism, and to integrate these with what appears to be a prioritisation of and focus on environmental communication.

Feedback

We would therefore encourage the research group to specify and clarify its profile with a view to the future. Depending on the responses to the questions in the overall assessment above, different strategies in relation to sources of external funding, publication channels, as well as the organisation of the group as a whole could be: the well-travelled road, perhaps leading to more projects on climate change with European or global funding; or several complementary focal points covering issues of globalisation and journalism beyond the natural environment?

4.5 NTNUHF – Media Acts

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 2

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This is a small research group embedded in a well-established and larger research cluster, which benefits from being part of a well-organised institution with quite strong leadership, a clear strategy and good resources. Media Acts forms part of the Department of Art and Media Studies and is the only research group to be submitted to the panel. The department's film scholars have established

Norwegian film as a field of academic study, an area that is now flourishing and attracting good numbers of PhD students. The resources available are good across the faculty, supporting all areas of faculty research with substantial core funding from the government and a notable research infrastructure. The fact sheet reveals a strong and laudable focus on research personnel in the budget. The extent of external funding is also notable, as is the diversity of sources. So far, as for the faculty as a whole, the major source of external funding in the area of assessment has been the RCN, with four new applications submitted in 2016. For future development of funding and risk management purposes, more diversity of substantial funding is recommended (for example, participation in H2020 programmes, as also noted in the data on strategic development). However, there should not be too much additional reliance on external funding. Overall, the financial resources are convincing. Some doubts remain about the personnel resources, especially at the student level – this is necessary in order to parallel the success rate in acquiring funding.

Research production and quality

The research items put forward for assessment from this research group were small in number but encompassed a range of output types (articles, chapters etc.). Subjects included the digital archive, critical theory, the biopic and originality. The overall quality was good, but not outstanding and the self-assessment document makes bolder claims about the research than is illustrated by the sample submitted – for example, the claim that the Media Acts group engages in research on media ecology. The strength of this research group is in the field of Norwegian film, but it also engages in good quality work in other areas. Current research projects (beyond the reading samples) include the mediatization of terrorism and neuroimaging.

Recruitment and training

A good recruitment policy is in operation for the group, with postdocs and some PhD students being appointed or recruited on the basis of whether or not they strengthen the Media Acts group's fields of interest. Overall, the measures to improve recruitment and training seem to be handled professionally. The self-assessment document states that senior members of staff mentor and guide affiliated PhD students, but it would have been useful to see information on how recruitment and expansion will be managed in the future.

Networking

The members of the Media Acts group are internationally well connected, and its members have made research visits to major international universities, including the University of California Berkeley, Harvard University, Humboldt University and the University of Westminster. They are actively developing further international interdisciplinary research collaborations. The research group also works to establish collaboration across faculty boundaries as well as with partners outside academia. However, there is a lack of information about cooperation at the national level between the universities.

Impact on teaching

The self-assessment indicates some teaching issues. For example, the connection between teaching and research is deemed to be less than ideal, and MA recruitment is regarded as challenging. The strong focus on research groups and external funding may contribute to such challenges, and a stronger integration of research and teaching, as outlined in the self-assessment report, may indeed rectify some of the problems. The research group is part of a faculty that actively monitors the research activity of individual staff members, and staff members are actively encouraged to compress teaching into fewer, more intense weeks.

Overall assessment

There is a slight discrepancy between the quality and variety of the individual research outputs submitted for assessment and the grander claims made in the self-assessment document about the overall department's research profile. The scope of the research outputs is potentially more limited than this suggests. This is a vibrant and strong group, but the individual items for assessment could have been selected with more care.

Feedback

The consistent topics and approaches of the unit could have been better reflected in the choice of individual research items submitted for assessment.

4.6 UiBHF – Digital Culture

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This research group has existed as an informal group for ten years, and formally since 2009. It has already, therefore, carried out a substantial amount of activities, organised according to six central 'principles' outlined in the self-assessment. The focus is not only on research and publications, but also on public outreach and visibility. The international orientation is notable: there is ample evidence of multiple international collaborations, and numerous international group members are mentioned in the self-assessment. While forms of cooperation within the group are well established and clearly functioning, three aspects could impede further development:

(1) the group being split into two separate subgroups (one focusing on electronic literature, one on digital culture).

(2) a rather low level of external funding and resources (the self-assessment mentions a previous HERA project that was key to the development of the group, but it finished in 2013). This fragmentation is illustrated by the fact that collaboration to attract research funding is not among the six principal types of activity within the group and in the description of research activities. Especially in light of the group's strong dependence on the large ELMCIP project in the past (finished in 2013), the panel would like to have seen a greater focus already now on attracting similar, internationally funded resources to continue the research group's work in the future.

(3) an additional point can be made about the relatively limited number of interdisciplinary research collaborations. The research group's involvement in various international networks and projects has yet to lead to links to partners outside the discipline. Yet, the research topics lend themselves well to such collaborations with not only artists, but also computer scientists, web developers and (semantic) data analysts. The group claims to be interdisciplinary by nature, sometimes involving artists, librarians and programmers in research projects, but this does not really come across in the projects, output and networks presented in the self-assessment, and nor does the possibility that their work could be opened up to disciplines beyond the Humanities.

Research production and quality

The self-assessment, the submitted publications and the CVs of the group are indicative of solid (but not necessarily outstanding) research and productivity. Publications do cover a wide variety of topics – reflecting the group's two focal areas (electronic literature, digital culture) – and also multiple types of publication outlets, from international journal articles, book chapters, and manuscripts to books. The quality of the publications varies, ranging from some weaker articles to some very interesting publications that are competitive at an international level. Overall, the level of publications is good to very good.

Recruitment and training

The self-assessment outlines some clear activities that include PhD students and that contribute to their training (for example, summer schools, involvement in international networks, external activities, festivals and exhibitions). Furthermore, PhD students seem to be embedded in concrete project work. However, the self-assessment notes a lack of regular funding for financing more PhDs, beyond a handful of grants, and the group seems to rely on external funding or self-funding. This may limit the establishment of dependable, long-term training structures.

Networking

The group's networks are strong, and its international connections are excellent. The inclusion of international scholars in the group is essential to its functioning, and cooperation with other researchers in Norway and beyond is well established. Furthermore, members of the group are part of formal networks and organisations that operate at an international level, as members or experts.

Impact on teaching

The self-assessment does not provide much information about the contributions to teaching, beyond noting that research is highly relevant to teaching at all levels (BA, MA, PhD) – due to the research-intensive programmes at UiBSV that actually require the input of the group. Furthermore, the report notes that tenured members have to teach as part of their contract – which is very much in line with many units under analysis.

It is regrettable that more detail is not provided in the self-assessment on how research informs teaching. A link seems to be missing between the group and study programmes and artistic, cultural and educational stakeholders. There is no focus on potential collaboration with libraries, design academies, local art galleries and artists, which could enrich the curricula substantially. This would strengthen these programmes substantially, however, as especially in education in the Humanities, training students to acquire not only knowledge, but also more professional skills, is becoming increasingly important. Involving students in research projects is certainly a good way forward, but more focus on valorisation, cooperation, interdisciplinary work etc. would certainly add to this. If the group is leading in data visualisation research methods (as claimed in its self-assessment), this knowledge is hopefully transferred to the students.

Overall assessment

This group is well established and has developed a number of successful internal cooperation measures. Furthermore, it seems to be embedded in multiple national and international networks. There is a notable emphasis on work that can compete at an international level, and the publication output is indicative of these ambitions. However, the group currently has very few external resources for research and PhDs, which limits development beyond what can be achieved through core funding and self-funded PhDs. Furthermore, the splitting of the group into two separate subgroups is notable

– with little overlap in terms of topics and research. More truly interdisciplinary research avenues could have been explored.

Feedback

While this group seems to be established and produces a solid amount of scientific output, it suffers from internal fragmentation. The combination of electronic literature and digital culture (with such diverse topics as game research, gender studies, digital subaltern studies and social media theory) is not convincing, at least in its current form. From the outside, this does not appear to produce a lot of synergies, and a split into two separate groups (or a re-connection with other units in the host institution) may be beneficial in the long run. Furthermore, a solid and consistent level of external funding may be needed to secure the long-term functioning of the group and more focus on translating research into the curricula might be needed to ensure they are as up to date and relevant as the research itself.

4.7 UiBSV – Journalism Studies

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 2

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The group has been established for ten years, with members from the Social Sciences, Humanities and Information Science, although the links to Information Science seem to be rather under-exploited. The group has succeeded in obtaining research grants for ‘Journalistic Reorientations’ from the RCN, with additional funding from the university. This project has been a key generator of a large number of research publications and conference papers. Three new projects have already attracted funding. The group is well embedded in the department and has been led by the same person. While the ‘reorientation’ project is oriented towards future journalistic perspectives, its direction seems safe rather than cutting edge, with a lack of interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative research. It could also benefit from some fresh thinking.

Research production and quality

The publication rate is high, though the bulk of publications stem from the one main ‘reorientation’ project. The number of publications in the level 2 journals is well above the national average. There is also a great deal of journalism in national news outlets, which is valuable for the institution and for general visibility, but does not represent research output as such. The samples of research provided were disappointing. The focus is inward-looking and not very adventurous. No comparative research was presented and the research questions do not seem very challenging. Collaboration with other disciplines and international partners is virtually lacking. It was puzzling that, with such an apparently high publication rate, there were so few publications that could be described as ‘excellent’. Although the research group claims to have attracted information scientists in the past, none of the research presented for evaluation made use of data (beyond fairly straightforward content analysis and graphs), which is a pity given the timeliness of this practice and its apparent use in earlier periods. The one piece of research using computer science was not published.

Recruitment and training

There is a reasonable gender balance in the group: 11 men and eight women, and there are five PhD students attached to the group – which is rather low in relation to the 11 tenured professors. The recruitment methods described in the institutional assessment seem to be used here: PhD students are recruited to groups and often go on to take up staff positions. International recruitment is not a priority. This is understandable in a practice-oriented institution, even though new avenues like data journalism, visual journalism, entrepreneurial journalism, etc. open for international recruitment. However, the serious research orientation makes the lack of international recruitment surprising.

Networking

There are good international connections in relation to the ‘reorientation’ project but little sign of the cross-fertilisation that might be expected from networking in the work presented. The lack of networking was commented on in the last evaluation.

Impact on teaching

This is difficult to assess without any data. No translation of the ‘reorientation’ project into teaching is reported, whereas such a project clearly has the potential to provide information for new courses (business modelling, innovation in journalism, entrepreneurship) and even new study programmes. Students are expected to carry out some basic research and all teaching staff are members of research groups, which should create better links between research and teaching. Every research group is required to run a master’s level course. The PhD programme is quite small.

Overall assessment

There is something rather parochial about the group’s research efforts. There is no comparative research and no evidence of advanced research methods, interdisciplinary collaboration or innovative approaches to the study and teaching of Journalism. It is possible that more substantive research was completed in the previous research period, but the work provided for this assessment was not of the standard expected of such a well-resourced department. The group has been very successful to date, but it is perhaps in danger of repeating itself rather than looking for new challenges.

Feedback

None of the work submitted seems to provide evidence of links to industry. And none of the academic staff members who submitted research appear to be experts in the use of data, which would be useful if there were to be such a tie-in. As things stand, the links to industry do not appear to yield much and could even inhibit a rather more robust approach to investigations in the field. The group would probably benefit from a more international orientation to research and to funding. They would benefit from looking outwards.

4.8 UiBSV – Rhetoric and aesthetics

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The research group unites three areas – visual culture, games and rhetoric. The principles relating to how the group is organised and its strategies are not explained in the self-assessment document, beyond some general remarks and the fact that the three areas joined forces ‘on the basis of shared interest’. What exactly the connecting principle is, and how the researchers systematically work together, is not evident. Some external resources are clearly funded by the RCN (e.g. for the project on Games and Transgressive Aesthetics) and there is some external funding from other public sources, but, overall, the information on resources is scarce.

Research production and quality

The self-assessment notes a number of the group’s activities, and the submitted publications and CVs are indicative of good or very good research. However, there is some notable variation between the group members – not all of them reach a level of solid productivity, which may lead to internal imbalance, also between the group’s three focal areas. The overall quality is nonetheless sound, and in parts also internationally competitive.

Recruitment and training

The self-assessment document gives little indication of the steps taken to secure training or to improve recruitment. As it is, the self-assessment merely states that PhD students are fully-integrated members of the group, and that they participate in its activities.

Networking

The group seems to have some strong (international) collaboration at the individual level, and the self-assessment document notes a previous influential, interdisciplinary project (Nomadikon), which is now finished. A ‘Centre of Excellence’ (to be funded by the RCN) is in the application process. While the networking makes a sound impression, it does not seem to be strategically planned; it depends on individuals and varies between the three subgroups.

Impact on teaching

The document notes several examples of the direct impact of the group’s research on teaching (at the BA and MA level). This seems to be very much in line with other groups’ links to teaching. No special measures are mentioned for a more formalised translation of research into teaching.

Overall assessment

This group’s output is of good quality, but the self-assessment does not give a good presentation of the group and its performance. Crucial information is lacking, and the descriptions of organisational principles, strategies, cooperation and the integration of PhD students are especially limited. In addition to this, the cooperation between the three focal areas (visual culture, games and rhetoric) remains unclear. This is a pity, as quite a few research activities appear to be happening within this group, and there are also signs of quality cooperation throughout the self-assessment document. External funding from the RCN also seems to be substantial. Furthermore, the submitted publications and the CVs bear witness to some good or very good research (with some notable variation in

productivity between the individuals in the group). Again, the self-assessment document does not do this justice.

Feedback

The self-assessment document is not very helpful, as many parts of it consist of just a few lines of text with standard statements. There are some very good researchers in the group, with impressive CVs and output, while the productivity of others could have been higher. From the self-assessment document and the submitted texts, the panel gets an impression of notable internal fragmentation in the group, not only in productivity, but also in topics, approaches and methods. While there seems to be some commonality in the scientific approach and the general perspective on media and communication phenomena, topics and interests still vary considerably. More coherence may be beneficial for the group. Clear goals and a strategy for internationalisation or attracting more varied external funding may also be helpful.

4.9 UiOHF – Media Aesthetics

Overall score: 4

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The topic of media aesthetics is very specific, located at the interface between art and media studies. It is not a well-established field, nor a field with an immediate 'return on investment'. The group has nonetheless succeeded in attracting research funding, positioning itself as a priority area within the faculty, pursuing active international and interdisciplinary collaboration in and outside academia, and establishing its position as an influential group that is advancing the field. The ambition of attracting more EU funding seems to have been put into practice in the form of the professor II appointments, in investing in international networking (workshops and seminars) as well as in staff exchange programmes.

The major threat to the group seems to be its reliance on internal 'priority' funding, despite attracting external funding. The substantial number of PhD students appear to be mainly funded through internal funding for prioritised research groups, and, to a lesser extent, externally. Two postdoc projects were granted funding, but more will have to follow to maintain the group. Overall, the group seems well prepared for the future with projects from various sources, a substantial number of PhD students to help attract more funding and good international networking and impact.

Research production and quality

More information about how all researchers participate in research collaborations internationally and outside academia would have benefited the assessment. It is promising to see Ram and Fritt Ord funding projects. The link with the arts would indicate a potential for further collaboration with art institutes, museums, artists etc. The output seem to be mainly of good to very good quality, even though from the viewpoint of Media Studies, some of the publications under review may lean too much towards art reviews rather than academic work – although the specific nature of the field allows this to a certain extent.

Recruitment and training

By appointing foreign personnel to professor II positions, attracting international PhD students, providing staff exchanges and hosting workshops, the group demonstrates a balanced recruitment strategy. The group is compact enough to provide regular PhD guidance meetings.

Networking

As mentioned, international workshops, staff exchanges, the COST action, recruitment, weekly meetings open to members outside the group etc. all contribute to a well-networked group. The group has developed good international contacts and extensive national collaboration with major academic institutions in the research area, as well as with external partners, such as the Norwegian Data Protection Authority, the Norwegian Museum of Technology and others. Contacts with other Norwegian academic institutions working on the same or related area of media aesthetics could have been reported in more detail.

Impact on teaching

Research activities might be expected to permeate the academic curricula as a result of the many courses taught by tenured staff. The interdisciplinary BA course under development also seems promising, especially because it goes one step further in translating research into education by advancing an interdisciplinary perspective.

Overall assessment

During its 14 years of existence, the group has succeeded in establishing itself as a leader in the field through innovative approaches to research, sound organisation and motivation. The group has built up good and well-maintained international networks, and it has well-developed interdisciplinary collaborations at the national level with most academic institutions in the research field. One of the group's strengths is its collaboration with external partners, including influential state authorities.

Feedback

The group seems to have set the right course for the future. Greater funding diversification might be advisable in that context, in order to retain a critical mass of established and new researchers working in the group.

4.10 UiOHF – Media and Innovations

Overall score: 4

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The group is embedded in the largest Humanities Faculty in Norway, at the University of Oslo. It comprises (a few) members from different institutions, both Norwegian and foreign, from academia and industry, and of different nationalities (also among PhD students), and seems to mainly revolve around CeRMI. This 'virtual' approach appears to be a good starting point for interdisciplinary and international cooperation. The link to the industry and the combination of applied and fundamental research are clearly strategic aims (also shown in ISMI), which should also make the group more financially independent of internal funding. This is also the case as regards the aim of increasingly taking on (leading) roles in H2020 consortia and fostering internal cooperation between researchers as a means of achieving this goal. Research seminars, conferences, networks etc. are organised on a daily basis, offering opportunities for internationalisation. This would appear to indicate that the group is outward-focused, future-oriented and open to collaboration.

There are some concerns however. (1) One important concern is that (based on there being no references to it in the group's self-assessment and only one in UiOHF's self-assessment) the group has not been very successful in attracting EU funding in its six years of existence, which, to a certain extent, seems to be at odds with the level of research output, ranking, staff and networking. This might raise questions about the efficacy of the steps the research group is taking to attract international research, the bottom-up approach of the leadership and the degree to which its international networking is paying off. (2) As also stated below, the research group seems to mainly consist of professors, and to a lesser extent of PhD students and applied researchers. This seems equally at odds with the applied research orientation (at least for a part of the group). If this is to be further developed, a recruitment strategy will be necessary that attracts diverse funding for the methodologies on media design and innovation to be translated into actionable insights for the industry.

Research production and quality

The group definitely produces some innovative and high impact publications and comprises researchers with outstanding publication records. Many of the publications under scrutiny have an impact in terms of innovative methodologies (data-gathering) and prospective theories (online ethics). The group seems to have a high output frequency, although many articles in the database also appear to be directed at a national audience, featuring in less cited (non-)academic journals.

Recruitment and training

Recruitment is international, which is good. On the other hand, it is worth questioning why a relatively successful and prioritised group only includes three PhD researchers. Are there so few projects? The group could also be expected to have 'applied' researchers (e.g. on the projects supported by the industry, through contract research etc.). It is also striking that PhD researchers do not collaborate with partners outside academia in a group that focuses on applied research and projects.

Networking

With links to national and European networks, both industrial and academic, CeRMI seems to be well-networked. Participation in international conferences is high, and with the ISMI conference and Journal on *Media Innovation*, the group has powerful in-house networking formats. International recruitment and visiting scholars also make a positive contribution, as well as links to leading organisations such as ECREA and QuT.

Impact on teaching

This is difficult to assess based on the available documentation. There is a course on media innovation and several MA dissertations on media innovations, but innovative methodologies and design techniques could permeate the curricula to a greater extent.

Overall assessment

Overall, this is as an excellent research group, with many laudable aspects, especially in terms of publications and networking. Some aspects would have been easier to assess given more information (impact on teaching, links to industry, projects funded). There does seem to be a discrepancy between the group's stated orientation towards industry and the work that it produces. This is not necessarily a criticism, as the work it produces is good, but it might suggest a lack of connectivity between its stated aims and the work its researchers prefer to engage in.

Feedback

The group has established a basis for growth and sustainability in its relatively short existence, illustrated especially by a strong track record in publications and networking, and innovative and interdisciplinary-oriented research. The 'hybrid' model is promising, although it will present challenges in terms of collaboration, decision-making and acquisitions. The prospect of attracting and leading more research at the European level is likely to require more than 'bottom-up' leadership, and the aim of combining applied and fundamental research will have to attract a variety of funding resources.

4.11 UiOHF – POLKOM

Overall score: 4

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The POLKOM research group is one of three groups in the Department of Media and Communication (IMK). It follows UiO's general strategy 'Strategy 2020' (for 2010-2020), the faculty strategy 'HF 2020' and the annual IMK plans. All of the above are based on national research strategies (both the RCN Strategy 2010-2020 and the Ministry of Education's Panorama strategy). The POLKOM group, which was established in 2014, has five senior members plus seven other staff members. It is supported by a Board of Directors (seven plus five members), representing researchers from other UiO departments as well as other Norwegian research institutions. Leadership of the centre is shared between two professors, whose division of labour is not explained.

The group has defined four main goals: producing high quality research, being proactive in applying for research funds, having a focused multidisciplinary recruitment policy and ensuring engagement

with the public. To meet these goals, six major strategic steps are outlined in line with the faculty strategy. The goals and strategic steps are well defined and show high ambitions, as reflected, e.g., in their aim to form a Centre of Excellence called the Centre for the Study of Political Communication and Resilience (COMRES). Most of the group's research is funded by RCN grants. There is no direct funding from either private Norwegian or international sources. The group is well supported by the faculty and the department, with adequate resources and infrastructure (a grant of NOK 350,000 for 2016-2017 for research purposes plus full administrative support), and these resources appear to be put to good use.

Research production and quality

The Department of Media and Communication has the highest production of publications per individual researcher in the national comparison (2.4 publication points per researcher), as stated in NIFU Report, 2016:14 (p. 38). The POLKOM members participating in the assessment have reported an average of 4.5 academic publications per year (2011-2015), which seems to be well above the national average (Table 4.1a, p. 39). Based on the articles submitted for review, the general quality of research is very good. The members of the group clearly follow the international state of the art in political communication research, which is evident in the publications. They contribute regularly to scholarly discussions, in both European and national forums. The researchers use empirical methods in an excellent way, and their research makes a notable contribution to knowledge in their research area.

However, POLKOM's research could be theoretically and conceptually more ambitious and innovative. Some of their publications are still at the level of reporting the results of an empirical research, instead of aiming at conceptual, theoretical or methodological development. In its strategic outline, POLKOM has a strong focus on the relatively novel and fashionable concept of 'resilience', but none of its publications appear to concern or apply this concept. Another factor to be considered concerns POLKOM's institutional affiliation with the Faculty of Humanities: This might also limit the interdisciplinary activities of the group, whose research essentially belongs to the social sciences.

Recruitment and training

POLKOM's hiring and career development practices follow the department's overall policies, which appear to be well planned and executed, as shown in the faculty's self-assessment document. The age structure of POLKOM is well balanced, with the average age of members being between 40 and 50. The gender balance is in favour of women (3 out of 5 members), which meets the overall target of 40% women for the faculty as a whole. As the number of POLKOM group members is relatively small and there are only three PhD students and one postdoc, plus one researcher and two non-tenured lecturers, it seems reasonable to assume that their training and mentoring is adequately organised and follows the faculty's overall policy. Most POLKOM researchers have either been recruited internationally or have recently had visiting professorships abroad, which shows that serious and successful endeavours are made to develop a more international research environment.

Networking

There is little evidence of POLKOM's activities in international networks. POLKOM organised a panel at the regional ICA conference in Copenhagen in 2015, but apart from this, ICA and ECREA (or any other international organisations) are only mentioned in the recruitment process framework. In accordance with the general faculty policy, students are encouraged to spend at least one semester abroad, but details are not provided of how this is executed in practice. The research staff includes PhD students from the US and Iran, an associate professor from Italy, and an adjunct professor from

Switzerland. The POLKOM workshops have been attended by international researchers, of whom five are mentioned (from the Universities of Zurich, Queensland, Roskilde, Copenhagen and Mid-Sweden). POLKOM's Board of Directors consists solely of Norwegian members. Although POLKOM emphasises close cooperation with Nordic partners in its self-assessment, there is little evidence of established institutionalised collaboration (except for one co-edited issue of Northern Lights).

Impact on teaching

There is no designated BA or MA programme in political communication, but POLKOM members participate in teaching as part of the teaching staff of the Department of Media and Communication. They teach several courses at both BA and MA level in political communication, political journalism, media and politics, and strategic communication. According to the self-assessment, the students are expected to take part in POLKOM activities and are given support in this connection, but there is no further information about how this works.

Overall assessment

As one of the three strategic research centres of IMK, POLKOM enjoys important support both from the department and the faculty. The POLKOM group is relatively new and small with five senior positions (four professors, one associate professor). It has an ambitious strategy, including an application for a Centre of Excellence (POLCORE) and for several other major research grants, from both the EU and domestic sources. The POLKOM members have been quite successful in securing external funding, mostly from the RCN programmes. In terms of academic publishing, the POLKOM researchers are very productive, which indicates that the group is well-led and organised.

However, although POLKOM's research is generally of high quality, there is some lack of focus both theoretically and conceptually. The research group might benefit from closer collaboration with researchers in the social and political sciences.

Feedback

The group has a lot of potential and, judging by their publications, they could be more ambitious in theory-building and conceptual development, as well as in methodological innovation. The group is in the process of establishing high-level international collaboration, but this could be more focused and aim for more regular and institutionalised forms of cooperation. This might also help in expanding POLKOM's funding base beyond purely domestic academic sources.

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6 List of abbreviations used in the reports

Abbreviation	Meaning
ABI	Archivistics, Library and Information Sciences
AHO	Oslo School of Architecture and Design
ATH	Ansgar University College and Theological Seminary
BI	BI Norwegian Business School
BVH	Buskerud and Vestfold University College
CeMRI	Center for research on media innovations, UiO,
COMRES	Centre for the Study of Political Communication and Resilience, planned Centre of Excellence at UiO
CRISTin	Current Research Information System in Norway
DHS	Diakonhjemmet University College
DIGSSCORE	Digital Social Science Core Facility
ECREA	European Communication Research and Education Association
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
ICA	International Communication Association
IFS	Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies
IJM	Journalism and Media Studies
ISMI	International symposium on media innovations
MF	Norwegian School of Theology

MHS	School of Mission and Theology
MULTIKUL	Multimodalitet og kulturendring / Multimodality and cultural change. Research priority at UiA
NHH	Norwegian School of Economics
NIFU	Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education
NIKU	Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research
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
OCCAS	Centre of Design research and the Oslo Centre for Critical Architectural Studies
POLKOM	Senter for studier av politisk kommunikasjon, UiO
PRIO	Peace Research Institute, Oslo
RCN	Research Council of Norway
REF	UK Research Excellence Framework (a system for performance-based research funding)
SAM	The Faculty of Social Sciences, HioA
SCANPUB	The Immigration Issue in Scandinavian public spheres 1970-2015. RCN-funded project at UiBSV
SH/SAMAS	Sámi University of Applied Sciences
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

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