



Norsk studentorganisasjon

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The Main Platform 2016-2019

Adopted by the NSO (National Union of Students in Norway) at its 2016 National Conference.

PLATFORM

The main platform specifies the fundamental principles of the organisation and takes precedence over all other political documents of the NSO.

The student in higher education

The principle of a free education and an equal right to education

Public higher education in Norway must be free of charge. Everyone must have the same rights and access to higher education. To overcome the barriers to equality of rights and access to higher education individual needs must be accommodated. Affirmative action may be necessary in some cases to ensure diversity within academia.

The legal protection of the students' learning environment needs to be strengthened. The government shall insure students against accidents and injuries in the same manner as employees are insured. To ensure protection of the students' legal rights, all students must have access to a student ombudsman, who can provide an independent source of assistance.

Student welfare services must ensure a secure framework which enables everyone to begin and to complete higher education. It must be possible to be a full-time student. All students must have a safe and reliable place to live throughout the course of their studies.

Quality in education

Higher education must be of high quality, internationally-oriented, research-based and relevant to the society.

The evaluation process of the students' performance must be fair, and based upon sound professional judgement. It must also contribute to the student's learning process.

Students themselves must be recognised as an academic resource, and student participation must be maintained at every level.

To achieve increased quality in higher education, equal emphasis must be placed on teaching qualifications as on academic qualifications when appointing academic staff. This shall be reflected in the formulation of national career policies for academics.

Internationalisation

Higher education must be an arena for accessibility and internationalisation of education, knowledge and culture.

Internationalisation shall be perceived as a resource for educational institutions and must therefore be prioritised, both financially and administratively.

Each individual institution must work towards including and integrating international students and researchers into the institution's community.

Academic aptitude

Higher education shall contribute to academic aptitude (development). It should develop each student's ability to think critically, enabling them to participate in and reflect on society, both as private individuals and as professionals.

Students are both part of and a resource for the academic community; it is therefore their right and duty to take responsibility for the development of academia.

Solidarity

The right of students to safety, academic freedom, democratic rights and education is global and must be protected. In cases where the rights of students are restricted or under threat, the National Union of Students in Norway will offer its united support as part of the international student movement.

Academia

Academia's social responsibility

Education, research and innovation are of great value to society. Therefore, academia has a social responsibility. This is especially important in relation to how we build up and further develop society. Consequently, academia needs to be able to respond to the challenges that humans are faced with, both at a national and global levels. To ensure transparency and the greatest possible value to society, all publicly-funded research must be published through open channels and available to all.

Academia's social responsibility also encompasses the international community through its inclusion of especially vulnerable people in the education system.

Academic freedom

Academic freedom is an important pillar in academia. This includes freedom of expression, the rights connected to one's own work, and the right to choose theme, method, sources and conclusions.

The autonomy of institutions

Academic autonomy of institutions is vital to the development of independent and critical research and education. Independent research and education is valuable for society, through contributing to continual societal development and to the critical assessment of social institutions.

While individual researchers must have academic freedom, both research and education are dependent upon funding. It is important that this funding doesn't come from unethical or environmentally harmful sources.

Each individual institution should be allowed to prioritise the areas they wish to invest in through their own strategies. To ensure breadth in research however, there must be

sufficient independent funding and positions to allow a significant number of researchers to carry out research outside of these prioritised areas as well.

Higher education in Norway is publicly funded and offered free of charge by public educational institutions. Private institutions may provide a supplement to what is on offer in public institutions and should be subject to the same demands and regulations. Private institutions may be partially financed by public funding, providing that they do not make a profit.

Diversity within academia

Equal opportunity is important for creating diversity in education and research. Diversity amongst students and researchers adds value, in the sense that people from different backgrounds and experience provide variety in ways of thinking. Therefore, education must be accessible to everybody. Academic recruitment methods should be adapted in order to meet the need for diversity.