Learning environment handbook
for students at the University of Bergen
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January 2011
In autumn 2004, the Learning Environment Committee (LMU) appointed a working group that produced a handbook for students on the physical and psychosocial learning environment. The handbook was approved by the University Board on 24 November 2005. The learning environment handbook was revised in autumn 2010, and the proposal for the revised handbook was adopted by the University on 28 October 2010.
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Content
Division of Student Affairs, UiB

Layout
Division of Communication, UiB

Cover photo
Hanne Kjersti Hagen
1 Preamble

1.1 Foreword
A good learning environment is important in students’ everyday lives, and it is a key factor in relation to academic quality. Among other things, high quality in education is conditional on a learning environment in which updated knowledge and a willingness to improve the quality of teaching are emphasised. The University Board has the overall responsibility for the students’ learning environment, and the Learning Environment Committee is the board’s advisory body. Students are also a key factor in shaping their own learning environment. Each student can contribute to a better learning environment, and we hope that this handbook can be a useful tool for both students and academic staff. Together, we can make UiB a good place to be and learn.

Sigmund Grønmo

Rector
1.2 Introduction
When the Quality Reform was introduced in autumn 2003, the learning environment became a focus of attention, and the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges section 4-3 emphasises the importance of a good study environment. The Act stipulates the conditions for work on the learning environment at the University of Bergen. The Learning Environment Committee (LMU) was appointed by the University Board to contribute to the implementation of the provisions on the learning environment.

We have chosen to define the term ‘learning environment’ as the overall physical, psychosocial and organisational conditions that facilitate the individual student’s study situation. Issues relating to pedagogical matters and issues that concern the quality of the teaching itself are therefore not part of our definition.

The systematic HSE work carried out at UiB is described in the HSE handbook and concerns both students and staff. The learning environment handbook concerns the learning environment, but it refers to the HSE handbook in some areas.

2. Goals for the learning environment at UiB
Key documents have been drawn up at UiB whose contents concern staff and students. They also include the working environment and requirements for the learning environment, cf. the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges section 4-3.

On 25 April 1996, the University Board decided that ‘The working environment at UiB shall:

• promote creativity, learning, the ability to work, health and well-being
• ensure that staff and students do not develop occupational illness or experience work-related accidents.
• be inclusive for staff and students who experience health problems and impaired work capacity
• ensure that all staff and students are treated with respect and care, and given responsibility. The abuse of power, in whatever form, will not be tolerated.’

Several action plans have also been drawn up to pursue these ambitions.

2.1 Strategic plan for the University of Bergen
The strategic plan is a long-term document that applies to the period 2011–2015 and is intended to be a management tool for the University Board and the university leadership. The plan presents overall objectives, basic values, and priorities for all of UiB's fields of action and also includes the learning environment.
The faculties and divisions also adopt long-term plans that are used as working documents in their activities. These are rolling plans that have a shorter timeframe than the university’s strategic plan.

2.2 Action plan for the learning environment
In 2010, the Learning Environment Committee prepared a proposal for a separate Action plan for work on the learning environment in the period 2011-2013. The action plan was adopted by the University Board on 28 October 2010. Among other things, the action plan contains plans for the physical, psychosocial and organisational learning environment at the university.

2.3 Action plan for students with disabilities
The action plan for students with disabilities 2007-2011 stipulates as an overall objective that as many students as possible shall be included in ordinary solutions with as little individual adaptation (universal design) as possible, but there must also be room for individually adapted solutions. Among other things, the plan contains a schedule for when various measures must be completed and who is responsible for implementation of the measures.

2.4 Action plan for health, safety and the environment 2009-2011
The purpose of the action plan is to describe UiB’s overall goals in relation to health, safety and the environment (HSE). This is done by defining performance goals in four target areas: the Psychosocial working environment, the Natural environment and environmental management, Health and buildings, and Hazardous working environments.

Each area has dedicated performance goals, which shall be realised through concrete measures:

- at the central level: organised by entities with specific responsibility for follow-up
- locally: all entities (faculties, divisions, departments, centres) through local action plans
- through various forms of cooperation between entities and levels.

3 Definitions

3.1 The organisational learning environment
The organisational learning environment consists of system-related factors such as the facilitation, allocation and management of work. The flow of information to students and feedback are important aspects of this. Health, safety and the environment is the responsibility of line managers. See also chapter 4.
3.2. The physical learning environment
The physical learning environment consists of the physical surroundings and any burdens relating to the teaching situation that affect the individual student’s ability and capacity to learn. See also chapter 5.

3.3 The psychosocial learning environment
The psychosocial environment consists of psychological and social factors that influence well-being, health and the ability to perform in the study location. Among other things, this includes interpersonal relations and protection against harmful psychological effects. The social environment, culture and welfare help to promote the psychosocial learning environment. See also chapter 6.

3.4 Students
It is natural here to define the term ‘student’ as referring to persons admitted to UiB in accordance with the current admissions regulations. A student holds a valid right to study, has paid the semester fee and registered. Students at UiB who participate in study-related exchanges abroad are considered to be ordinary students prior to and after such stays, but are otherwise not deemed to be covered by UiB’s responsibility for the learning environment. Persons admitted to the Centre for Continuing Education, exchange students, guest students, programme students and visiting students have the same rights as ordinary students.

3.5 Non-conformities
Non-conformities are breaches of requirements laid down in statutes and regulations, licences, internal rules, goals and plans. Non-conformities must be registered and dealt with by the line organisation, see item 8.4.

4 Organisation
The learning environment is the responsibility of the line manager on a par with financial, quality, personnel and operational responsibilities; see figure 1. The management is responsible for establishing, maintaining and developing systematic work on the learning environment. Managers at all levels are responsible for taking learning environment considerations into account in the activities they manage. Students are obliged to comply with the stipulated requirements. The students have student representatives at all levels of the organisation. The responsibility and tasks assigned to the individual functions are described later in this chapter.
4.1 Responsibilities and tasks

4.1.1 The University Board
The University Board has overall responsibility for the students’ learning environment. In cooperation with the student welfare organisation, the board shall seek to provide suitable conditions for a good study environment and to improve student welfare at the educational institution. The board is responsible for ensuring that the learning environment is fully satisfactory on the basis of an overall assessment of considerations relating to the health, safety and welfare of the students.

4.1.2 The University Director
The University Director has been delegated responsibility for designing, running and supervising the university’s learning environment by the University Board. The University Director’s representatives in work on the learning environment are the directors of the Division of Student Affairs, the Department of Estate and Facilities Management and the University Library.
4.1.3 The Faculty Directors
In cooperation with the deans, the faculty directors shall ensure that the faculties follow up goals and official requirements. The faculty directors shall ensure that all entities work systematically on the learning environment and coordinate learning environment work between the departments where relevant.

4.1.4 Heads of departments
Heads of department are responsible for local adaptation of the systematic work on the learning environment and for implementing local activities in the entities. Among other things, this includes informing new students about safety procedures (for example in case of fire) and ensuring that they, if necessary, receive training in work procedures that entail a particular risk (for example laboratory work). Written documentation and procedures (for example work procedures and product safety data sheets for chemicals) shall be readily available. In some cases, the chair of the programme board will have special responsibility for the academic learning environment.

4.1.5 The students
The students at UiB are obliged to familiarise themselves with and comply with regulations relating to the learning environment.

4.2 The student representatives
4.2.1 The student parliament
The student parliament is the supreme democratic student body at the university. It consists of 19 elected student representatives and one representative from each of the university’s six faculties. The student parliament mainly considers matters that concern the government of the university and entities above faculty level. The student parliament also elects student representatives to several important councils, boards and committees at the university. All students are entitled to attend and speak at the student parliament and can present matters.

Each year, the student parliament elects an executive committee consisting of four students employed full-time who function as the students’ main representatives. In addition to preparing and implementing decisions of the student parliament, the Executive Committee is also available to students who have problems or questions relating to their rights at the university.

4.2.2 The student councils (Studentutvalget)
The student councils are elected by the students at the individual faculties. Their job is to safeguard student interests at the faculty level. The student councils also act as a link between the faculty management and the students. The students are represented on all councils, boards and committees at the faculty. The student
council has a coordinating role in relation to all academic committees and programme committees at the faculty.

4.2.3 The student committees (Fagutvalg)
The student committees' job is to safeguard student interests at subject level, department level and programme level. The student committees work on academic and social issues for the students at the department and act as a link between the students and the academic staff. Representatives of the student committee are often members of councils, boards and committees at the department. The student committee functions as a consultative body for the department in matters that concern the students and serve as a point of contact for students who need help with various matters.

4.3 The Learning Environment Committee

4.3.1 Objective
UiB’s Learning Environment Committee (LMU) was appointed by the University Board in order to contribute to the implementation of the learning environments provisions laid down in the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges section 4-3.

4.3.2 Function
The Learning Environment Committee is a consultative body that has been assigned responsibility for following up matters relating to the university’s physical and psychosocial learning environment, cf. the committee’s remit.

4.3.3 Composition
Pursuant to the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges section 4-3, the students and the institution shall have an equal number of representatives on the committee. There are eight members of the committee. Four students are appointed by the student parliament. In addition, at least four students are appointed as deputy representatives. The remaining four members representing the institution are high-level managers (deputies in brackets):

- Vice-Rector for Education (Vice-Rector for International Relations)
- The Director of the Division of Student Affairs (Deputy Director of the Division of Student Affairs)
- The Director of the Department of Estate and Facilities Management (Building Manager)
- One dean (dean)
The office of committee chair alternates between students and the institution every other year. The Council for Students with Disabilities, the Student Welfare Organisation in Bergen (SiB) and the University Library have observer status.
4.3.4 The tasks of the Learning Environment Committee
LMU’s most important task is to gain insight into and an overview of how the students’ learning environment is actually safeguarded at the institution, so that it can carry out an overall assessment of the situation and ensure that any challenges are dealt with. LMU shall also develop and maintain expedient reporting systems for the learning environment.

4.3.5 Reports from the institution
Pursuant to section 4-3 of the Act, the Learning Environment Committee shall be informed about complaints that the institution receives from students concerning the learning environment. LMU may submit statements on such matters to the University Board. LMU must also be informed about any orders issued and individual decisions made by the Labour Inspection Authority in relation to the institution's learning environment. LMU must also receive a copy of any reports concerning accidents, near-accidents and non-conformities, see 8.4.

4.4 The Welfare Council
The Welfare Council is the supreme student body in the Student Welfare Organisation in Bergen (see 7.6). It comprises a total of 21 representatives from the student parliament at UiB and other educational institutions affiliated with SiB. Among other things, the Welfare Council decides how the semester fees are distributed between different welfare services run by the students. The Welfare Council also appoints student representatives to many offices related to SiB. The Student Welfare Board is the Welfare Council’s executive body. It is responsible for the implementation of decisions and the day-to-day running of the council, while the Board for Cultural Affairs is the executive body for issues relating to cultural affairs.

4.5 Coordinating learning environment work with other enterprises
UiB has cooperation agreements for HSE work with Helse Bergen (Bergen Health Trust) and Uni Research. Student activities at departments that are covered by the agreements are largely included on a par with the staff.

UiB shall have cooperation agreements with enterprises where students are seconded in order to clarify the division of responsibility for the learning environment. The students are obliged to familiarise themselves with and comply with these agreements. Separate agreements apply to student exchanges with universities abroad. The Division of Student Affairs has more information about study abroad.
5 The physical learning environment
The physical learning environment comprises all physical, ergonomic, chemical and biological factors that may affect students’ ability and opportunity to learn.

5.1 Requirements
The requirements that apply to the physical learning environment are stipulated in the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges section 4-3 no 2.

5.2 Measures
When planning, building, furnishing and running new teaching facilities, teaching rooms, laboratories and student workplaces (reading rooms, computer rooms, office work places etc.) it must be ensured that the requirements are fully implemented and that the established quality of the physical learning environment is maintained during the operating phase. LMU will be a consultative body in connection with the planning of large projects and be represented at the handover inspection.

In cases where research trips, fieldwork and travel involving stays abroad are included as part of the study programme, the person responsible for the course/subject shall carry out a written risk assessment in which all circumstances relating to the student’s safety and health are assessed, cf. Guidelines for mapping and evaluating risks relating to health, safety and the environment (HSE). Applicable legislation, UiB’s internal guidelines and the entity’s own instructions shall form the basis for the risk assessment. Where the risk of injuries and illness is not at an acceptable level, preventive measures shall be implemented before the start-up of any activity. The students shall always be informed about the result of the assessment.

New students shall be informed about safety procedures (for example in case of fire) and, if necessary, receive training in work procedures that entail a particular risk (for example laboratory work). Written documentation and procedures (for example work procedures and product safety data sheets for chemicals) shall be readily available.

Students are obliged to comply with guidelines and safety regulations applicable in the study location, including notifying the head of the department/division about matters that may constitute a risk of harm to people, the environment and material assets.
6 The psychosocial learning environment

The psychosocial learning environment includes psychological and social factors that influence well-being, health and the ability to perform in the study location. Among other things, this includes interpersonal relations and protection against psychological harm. The social environment, culture and welfare help to promote the psychosocial learning environment.

In cooperation with the Student Welfare Organisation (SiB), the University Board shall seek to provide suitable conditions for a good study environment and to improve student welfare at the educational institution. This shall be achieved through the provision of various services, among other things.

6.1 Ethical guidelines and sexual harassment

UiB has adopted ethical guidelines that concern the relationship between students and supervisors.

At the university, there are contact persons whose role it is to provide support, guidance and help if anyone feels exposed to unwelcome or threatening sexual attention from fellow students or staff.

6.2 Equality

UiB has an equality committee whose purpose it is to promote genuine equality at the institution regardless of gender, ethnicity, national origin, skin colour, language, religion and faith, political views, organisational affiliation, sexual orientation, functional ability, age and other matters.

UiB has a separate website for equality, where you will find the Action plan for Gender Equality at UiB (which includes measures for both staff and students) and other relevant information.

7 Institutions, councils and services offered at UiB

7.1 Service declaration

The service declaration applies to everyone who has been admitted to UiB. Students’ legal rights are described in statutes and regulations. The declaration provides an overview of the services and assistance that the university is required to provide for the student, as well as what the university expects of the student with regard to academic conduct and effort. The service declaration also includes services from SiB.

Particular rights and obligations at master’s level are described in more detail in the individual education plan.
### 7.2 Student advisory service at the faculties’ student information centres

All the faculties have a student information centre where students are offered academic guidance. If you find yourself in a situation where you need help or guidance in order to progress in your studies or if you are uncertain about what course of study or subject to choose or other issues relating to your academic career and career choice, the university’s student counsellors can provide you with guidance and help. At the faculties’ student information centres, you can get information at the counter or book a guidance appointment with a student counsellor.

At the faculties’ student information centres, you can obtain information about and guidance on the following topics and more:

- courses of studies, study programmes and subjects
- degrees and degree structures
- studies abroad
- help with semester registration and registration for assessments/exams (user support for StudentWeb)
- user support for My Space
- admission and internal transfers
- approval/ recognition of external education and exemption from courses
- adjusting the individual education plan
- leaves of absence
- coping with studies
- statutes and regulations at UiB.

### 7.3 The Centre for Information and Student Services at the Division of Student Affairs

The Student Information Centre at the Division of Student Affairs is UiB’s central first-line service for students. It is responsible for an integrated first-line service in relation to the tasks for which the Division of Student Affairs is responsible. The Centre for Information and Student Services at the Division of Student Affairs offers guidance over the counter. It provides the following services, among others:

**General services**

- StudentWeb assistance
- Transcripts of grades
- Change of exam registration / withdrawing from exams
- Organising the handing out and submission of home exams
- Registration of postgraduate studies taken abroad
- Registration of name changes
- Student confirmations
Exchanges
• Guidance about applications
• Applications for periods of study abroad

Services for international students
• Information about the extension of permits for residence and part-time employment for full degree students
• Student status confirmation
• Information about the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) for quota students

Services for students with disabilities
• See 7.3.1

7.3.1 Students with disabilities
Services for students with disabilities are part of the tasks assigned to the Centre for Information and Student Services at the Division of Student Affairs. The service provides help for students who have some form of disability. It can help with:
• Needs assessments and guidance
• Adaptation of studies
• Adaptation of the physical environment
• Organising special examination arrangements
• Advice to students with reading and writing difficulties.

7.4 The Council for Students with Disabilities
The Council for Students with Disabilities is an advisory body to the university’s administration and other authorities on issues that concern students with disabilities, and it reports to LMU. The Council shall have particular focus on organisational and practical obstacles that may prevent students with disabilities from completing their course of study. The Council shall comment on issues that concern the situation of students with disabilities at the university. It also represents users in building matters that concern the adaptation of facilities and technical installations for students with disabilities.

7.5 The Central Appeals Committee at UiB
Pursuant to the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges section 5-1, the university is required to have an appeals committee. The Appeals Committee considers two main types of issues:
1. Different types of appeals: The most important appeals concern:
• Admission to master’s degrees and other programmes with local admission
• Cases concerning leaves of absence during studies
• Cases concerning non-approval of mandatory work, relegation to a lower level, loss of the right to study etc.
• Procedural errors relating to exams
• The election of representatives at UiB
• Rejections of requests for access to information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.

2. Various types of disciplinary action against students. The biggest group here consists of cases involving annulment of exams and/or exclusion due to cheating. The Appeals Committee does not consider appeals concerning exam grades. If you wish to appeal your grade, you must contact the faculty.

7.6 The Student Welfare Organisation in Bergen
SiB’s main task is to offer reasonable and good welfare services to students in Bergen. SiB shall also help to ensure that the students have a good life in their spare time. SiB runs children’s day care centres, student housing, student cafeterias and sports centres.

SiB also offers several health and guidance services, including the careers centre, the Student Counselling Service, the Mental Health Care Centre, the Dental Service and a Health Care Centre. SiB also reimburses medical expenses that exceed NOK 350, and you can apply for financial support from the Health Fund in case of extensive illness and treatment. SiB’s services are financed through income from operations and the semester fees. SiB is run by the users, as the students are in majority on the board.

7.6.1 The Student Counselling Service
The Student Counselling Service provides advice, guidance and practical help in all types of personal, social and financial matters. The service includes both individual conversations and various groups and courses. Examples of topics discussed by the groups and in courses are help to cope with studies, help to cope with stress, exam nerves and speaking in public.

7.6.2. The Students’ Mental Health Care Centre (SPH)
SPH is a low-threshold service for students who need someone to talk to without a referral from a doctor. The service offers short-term conversational therapy and the service is free of charge.

7.6.3. Other services offered by SiB
SiB also offers housing and children’s day care centres. In addition, SiB runs several sports halls and sports centres for students. The sports services are preventive measures, and the membership fee is therefore low.
7.7 The Student Chaplaincy
Two chaplains have been appointed by the Church of Norway to work among students at the university and at the university colleges in Bergen. The chaplains work closely with SiB. In addition to providing ordinary chaplaincy services for the Student Congregation, the chaplains also have time to talk to students who are in a difficult life situation, have questions about faith or doubt, or who need someone to talk to for other reasons.

7.8 Jussformidlingen
Jussformidlingen is run by advanced law students at the Faculty of Law at UiB. The organisation offers free legal aid to all students with legal problems of different types (with the exception of criminal law, cases concerning the law on allodial rights, tax planning, debt recovery and debt collection).

8 Guidelines and procedures at UiB
Ensuring good procedures for following up the learning environment is a fundamental precondition for meeting UiB’s challenges in a constructive manner. Systematic work is the key to achieving a good learning environment. Improving the learning environment is the management’s responsibility, but all students are encouraged to participate in this work. The work can be divided into:

- Preventive work
- Solving individual problems
- Integrated learning environment work.

The systematic HSE work carried out at UiB is described in the HSE handbook. The HSE handbook and the regulations contain several guidelines and procedures that also concern students, see 8.6. The learning environment handbook deals with the learning environment, but refers to the HSE handbook in connection with relevant guidelines.

8.1 Mapping the learning environment

8.1.1 Objective
To ensure that the students’ learning environment is mapped.

8.1.2 The ‘Student Barometer’
Every other year, the Division for Student Affairs at UiB carries out a survey to identify important areas of student life where there is room for improvement on UiB’s part. The questions concern all aspects of study quality, including the physical and psychosocial learning environment. The Director of Student Affairs informs LMU about the results. Reports from such surveys are considered by LMU and the Education Committee and submitted to the University Board.
8.1.3 The learning environment survey
In 2004 and 2010, the Learning Environment Committee conducted learning environment surveys. LMU considered the reports from the surveys and follows up any challenges or shortcomings that were uncovered by the surveys. Future learning environment surveys will be initiated by LMU as the need arises.

8.1.4 The physical learning environment
The Learning Environment Committee makes routine visits to the faculties that include a review of the physical learning environment. The faculties also report annually on the learning environment in connection with the Report on Educational Attainments.

8.1.5 Other evaluations
The Division of Student Affairs also carries out annual evaluations of the recruitment initiatives and the reception of new students. As part of the work on the annual Report on Educational Attainments, the faculties also report on matters relating to the learning environment.

8.2 Welcoming new students
The main welcoming of new students takes place at the start of the autumn semester. The Division of Student Affairs has the overall responsibility for this. The welcome ceremony, the university’s mentor week, information meetings and various events are the main elements in welcoming new students. Mentor week is coordinated by the Division of Student Affairs, but it is organised by the students at the individual faculties.

8.3 Solving individual problems
Shortcomings and problems can arise at all levels of the university system. As a rule, it should always be endeavoured to solve a problem at the lowest possible level. Examples of individual matters include safety deficiencies, harassment, inadequate adaptation to special needs etc. Non-conformities are a type of individual matter that must be handled in accordance with to the following procedure.
8.4 Guidelines for reporting non-conformities, accidents and near-accidents

The HSE handbook for staff [lenke] contains guidelines for how to report on non-conformities, accidents and near-accidents in accordance with official requirements. The guidelines apply to all types of non-conformities, accidents or near-accidents that occur at UiB. Students and other persons (members of the public etc.) not employed by UiB are also covered by these guidelines.

Injuries, accidents, near-accidents or non-conformities that affect students shall be reported and dealt with as they occur and in writing in accordance with the guidelines in the HSE handbook for staff on reporting non-conformities, accidents and near-accidents. In such cases, the Learning Environment Committee must always receive a copy.
8.5 Emergency response plans for UiB students

8.5.1 Emergency response plan for UiB students abroad
The purpose of the emergency response plan is to make stays abroad safer for students and to reduce the risk of serious or unfortunate incidents, as well as to provide the best assistance possible for UiB students abroad who need help.

8.5.2 Other emergency response plans
UiB has drawn up several emergency response plans to make students safer and in order to ensure that procedures are in place if an accident or other serious incident should occur. The following plans can be mentioned, among others:

• Fires during exams on external premises
• Information to students in case of emergencies
• IT systems’ errors/downtime

8.6 Other relevant guidelines and procedures at UiB
• Work involving open radioactive sources
• Fire protection
• Establishing and updating the index of hazardous substances and biological factors
• General safety instructions for fieldwork etc.
• Guidelines for hazardous waste and problem waste, including radioactive and explosive waste
• Internal inspections (audits)
• Handling conflicts
• Setting up workspaces with computer screens at UiB
• Regulations relating to systematic health, environmental and safety work in enterprises

9 Compensation and insurance

9.1 Compensation schemes for students
Students are covered by insurance for occupational injuries suffered in the study location during teaching hours, cf. the National Insurance Act section 13-10 third paragraph. The National Insurance Act does not provide for full compensation in connection with occupational injuries. For university staff, the Act relating to industrial injury insurance covers expenses over and above expenses covered by the National Insurance Act. The Act relating to industrial injury insurance does not apply to students. The university is liable for injuries on the basis of the law of tort. This means that the university may be liable to pay compensation for injuries incurred due to negligence on the part of university staff and injuries incurred due to faults in technical installations etc.

Reference: The National Insurance Act
9.2 Insurance schemes for students

Students are not covered by the Act relating to industrial injury insurance. If an accident should occur, the student is not automatically covered by insurance through UiB and can therefore suffer financial loss for a prolonged period. If the student wants the same insurance coverage as university staff, it is recommended that he/she take out travel insurance, personal insurance and disability insurance. Foreign students are not automatically entitled to National Insurance benefits. They must contact their local NAV office for more information.

Reference: The Act relating to industrial injury insurance

10 Regulations

This section provides an overview of regulations that are important to the students’ learning environment and information about where the regulations in question can be found.

10.1 The Act relating to Universities and University Colleges

Section 4-3 concerns the learning environment. It reads as follows:

(1) The board has overall responsibility for the students’ learning environment. In cooperation with student welfare organizations, the board shall seek to provide suitable conditions for a good studying environment and to enhance student welfare at the educational institution.

(2) The board is responsible for ensuring that the learning environment at the institution, including the physical and mental working environment, is fully satisfactory on the basis of an overall assessment of considerations regarding the health, safety and welfare of the students. The design of the physical working environment shall as far as possible and reasonable, ensure:

a) that premises, access roads, staircases, etc. are dimensioned and equipped for the activities that take place there.

b) that the premises have satisfactory lighting and acoustics and sound indoor climate and air quality.

c) that the premises are properly maintained and are clean and tidy.

d) that the premises are equipped so as to avoid detrimental physical strain for the students.

e) that activities are planned so as to prevent injuries and accidents.

f) that technical installations and equipment are provided with protective devices and are maintained so as to protect students from danger to life and health.
g) that premises, access roads, sanitary facilities and technical installations are designed in such a way as to enable persons with disabilities to study at the institution.

h) that the learning environment is well adapted for students of both sexes.

i) that the learning environment is designed according to the principles of universal design.

The Ministry may in regulations lay down further provisions concerning requirements regarding the learning environment.

(3) At the institution there shall be a learning environment committee to assist in ensuring implementation of the provisions laid down in the first and second paragraph. The committee shall take part in the planning of measures relating to the learning environment and closely follow developments in matters concerning the safety and welfare of the students. The board may also assign other duties to the committee. The learning environment committee shall be kept informed of complaints concerning the learning environment that the institution receives from students. The learning environment committee may submit opinions concerning such matters. The learning environment committee shall be informed of instructions and other individual decisions issued by the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority. The learning environment committee reports directly to the board and shall submit a report each year concerning the institution’s work on the learning environment. The students and the institution shall each have an equal number of representatives on the committee. The committee shall elect a chairman each year alternately from among the institution’s and the students’ representatives.

(4) The institution’s work on the learning environment shall be documented and be included as part of the institution’s internal systems for quality assurance pursuant to section 1-6.

(5) The institution shall, to the extent possible and reasonable, adapt study provisions for students with special needs. This adaptation must not result in a reduction of the academic requirements of the individual courses.

(6) The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority supervises compliance with the requirements laid down in the second paragraph. The provisions of chapter 18 of the Working Environment Act concerning supervision and coercive measures, etc. shall apply correspondingly in so far as they are applicable. The Ministry may issue regulations containing supplementary provisions concerning supervision and coercive measures in order to promote compliance with this section.
10.2 The Working Environment Act
Section 1-6. Persons who are not employees

(1) The following persons are regarded as employees in relation to the Act’s provisions concerning health, environment and safety (our emphasis) when performing work in undertakings subject to the Act:

a) students at educational or research institutions,

f) persons who for training or rehabilitation purposes are placed in undertakings without being employees,

g) persons who without being employees participate in labour market schemes.

The Ministry may by regulation provide exceptions from the provision laid down in the first sentence.

10.3 Other relevant acts

- Act relating to the prevention of fire, explosion and accidents involving hazardous substances and the fire service
- Act relating to the supervision of electrical installations
- Act relating to the production and use of genetically modified organisms, etc. (Gene Technology Act)
- Act relating to procedure in cases concerning the public administration (Public Administration Act)
- Act relating to protection against pollution and relating to waste (Pollution Control Act)
- Act relating to gender equality (Gender Equality Act)
- Act relating to public access to documents in the public administration (Freedom of Information Act)
- The Personal Data Act
- Act relating to the control of products and consumer services (Product Control Act)
- Act relating to control of communicable diseases
- Act on radiation protection and use of radiation
11 Maintenance and development of the learning environment handbook

11.1 Objective
To ensure that the handbook is maintained and updated continuously online in step with changes in the learning environment. The handbook's dynamic nature requires it to follow developments in the field, particularly in relation to new procedures and provisions.

11.2 Responsibility
Responsibility rests with the University Director. The Division of Student Affairs and the Learning Environment Committee shall, on behalf of the University Director, maintain and develop the learning environment handbook for students.

For more information: uib.no/the-learning-environment