Newsletter

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATICS, UIB
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Editor-in-chief: Inge Jonassen. Editor: Randi Heggernes Eilertsen. Contributions or comments to the newsletter are very welcome. Old newsletters can be found here.

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you all had a nice summer and a good break from work!

In August it is always great to meet colleagues again – and not the least to welcome new students to our study programs and courses! As you have probably seen, we had a good number of applicants for all our study programs, and I hope and believe that all our new students will enjoy studying in Bergen and at our department! We will do our very best to give them the best possible education and prepare them for great careers!

This week I have been taking part in Arendalsuka –an event bringing together leaders from academia, industry, government, and politics – with numerous seminars and panel debates. It has been useful to be here to learn about current developments and discussions, and to connect and discuss with other participants. Maybe the most popular topic – the subject of over 100 events and mentioned in far more – is Artificial Intelligence. The level of understanding of AI is highly variable, but has improved since last year according to colleagues who attended then as well. Of course, ChatGPT and other generative AI tools made available to the public over the last year, has contributed a lot to that. I appreciate the efforts made by colleagues both at UiB and elsewhere to share information to the public through seminars, interactions with media, writing books etc. so that AI discussions around dinner tables and among policy and decision makers are increasingly becoming knowledge based.

There are also discussions about what competence is needed for the society going forward, and ICT is the one area that is mentioned by most. This is in line with the competence barometer from NHO, the main organization for Norwegian companies, and seems to be the consensus. The society needs ICT specialists, but also ICT knowledge for professionals in other fields. The need for continued education is emphasized. ICT competence is needed not only in business, but also for meeting the climate and nature crises and for the green transition. At our department, we are doing our best to help meet these needs. We will continue arguing for the need to increase resources to maintain or increase our student production, and to still ensure the high quality and research basis for the education.

I look forward to a new semester, and to working with all of you who are engaged in providing our students with the best possible education – all while doing cutting edge research in informatics.

I wish you all a nice weekend!

Inge

The Dean's Blog - Gunn Mangerud

The Dean's blog aims to inform us of ongoing work and processes at The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. Her latest posts:

- Vivat Academia
- Travle uker før sommerferien

Photo by Magne Haveraaen

ECMA International meeting

In July, the department hosted the 97th Plenary Meeting of Technical Committee 39 of ECMA International, the standardizing body for the JavaScript programming language.

Mikhail Barash organised the meeting and says: "As well as the formal decisions made, the meeting was very successful in terms of collaboration opportunities. We have invited several members of the JavaScript committee to give guest lectures at INF214, co-supervise students within INF219 and INF319 projects, and give talks at the Bergen Language Design Laboratory seminar. The meeting was very relevant for our teaching, too: some of the novel JavaScript features which were discussed during the meeting will be covered this year in INF214 lectures."

Digi.no wrote an article about the meeting, which can be read here with a subscription: Nye endringer fra denne gjengen gjør Javascript raskere

Photos by Eirik Herfindal

Joint CEDAS - NORBIS Summer School

From August 7 - 11, more than 50 data scientists from across Norway came together at the Joint CEDAS-NORBIS Summer School to discuss data science and its biomedical applications.

The summer school featured keynotes, theoretical and practical sessions on Machine Learning, Statistics, and Visual Data Science.

If you are wondering why our building has had a sudden increase in hip new people and a child-like energy this week; don't worry, it's just our new students! Please welcome the small human beans <3

Welcome, new colleagues!

Sondre Batalden

Sondre Batalden has just finished his apprenticeship at the UiB IT department, and has joined us as a research technician, where he will be supporting CBU and ELIXIR for the next six months.

Welcome, Sondre!

Ingeborg Winge

Ingeborg Winge has started a new position as an administrative coordinator for ELIXIR Norway. She has a PhD in molecular psychiatry/ neurobiology, has worked the last six years at the Centre for Cancer Biomarkers, and has over 15 years' experience from UiB.

Welcome, Ingeborg!

Laura Ann Garrison

Laura Ann Garrison completed her PhD in the VisGroup in September, and now she returns as a tenure track Associate Professor.

Welcome back, Laura!

Mikhail Barash

Mikhail Barash will no longer work as a postdoc at our department... because he will be working as an Associate Professor at our department!

Congratulations on the new job, Mikhail!

Hilde Jordal and Tyra Fosheim Eide

Two new research assistants – Hilde Jordal and Tyra Fosheim Eide – has joined the didactics group. Both are UiB students: Hilde is going her bachelor's in data technology, while Tyra is doing her degree in cognitive science at the Faculty of Social Sciences. They will, among other things, be developing teaching materials for INF100, INF101, INF102, and INF113.

Welcome, Hilde and Tyra!

Current Issues

Photo by Wolfgang Fricke

Annual boat trip

We have the pleasure of inviting all staff at the Department of Informatics to the annual summer boat trip!

On Thursday the 24th you can:

- Enjoy free food and drinks
- Socialize with colleagues
- Experience West Norwegian nature (the best kind of Norwegian nature!)
- Wave to the students on the other boat

Meet up at Fjordgaten 5, 5006 Bergen 16:15. We are in the boat “Vestgar”. The boat will arrive back in Bergen (Bryggen) at 20:30.

If you are going to attend the trip, please sign up before 12:00 on Monday the 21th of August: Boat signup
Limited places so be sure to sign up ASAP.

See you at sea!

Life Science Data Management: Planning workshop

21.08.2023 - 09.00–22.08.2023 - 13.00

ELIXIR Norway and Centre for Digital Life Norway is inviting researchers (PhD candidates, Post Doctoral Fellows, Researchers, Associate Professors and Professors) in existing and upcoming Life Science projects to develop their DMP in this workshop.

Read more: Life Science Data Management: Planning workshop (uib.no)

ICT Research School Annual Meeting

The ICT Research School's annual meeting is organised by and for PhD candidates enrolled in the PhD program at the Department of Informatics. The aim of this event is to give PhD candidates the opportunity to strengthen collaboration among the candidates, exchange research ideas and experiences, and to improve their presentation skills in a safe environment.

All PhDs in the department are expected to attend. Read more on uib.no.

Department Discord

We have a department dicord channel, in which you can find notices about events, alerts about leftover cake, and generally great banter.

Join our discord here.

Reminder: Guest routine

Inviting and hosting guest researchers is a natural and welcomed part of our academic work. It is still crucial to act according to our routines and procedures when planning to invite a guest.

If you are inviting a guest researcher to our department, you must follow the guest routine found here.

Vacant positions

- PhD Research Fellow in Visualization
- PhD Research Fellow in Informatics – Cryptology (up to 3 positions)
- PhD Research Fellow in Causality and Reinforcement Learning

See all open positions at UiB

Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Please contact research coordinator Stefanie Meyer if you plan to apply. All applications need to be approved by the department leadership before submission. By following the link, you can find out more about our research support services.

Abel Prize: The Abel Prize is given to individuals that have contributed pioneering scientific achievements in mathematics. Nomination by 1 September 2023.

New **UiB Global Challenges:** UiB has issued a call within its strategic area "Global Challenges". Funding covers meeting, seminar and travel costs needed to develop cross-disciplinary research activities. Proposals need to include concrete plans for research collaboration and writing grant applications. Employees at Postdoc, researcher, Assoc./Professor level with UiB as their main employer can apply. At least 2 UiB faculties need to participate in an application to this call.

For more detailed information, please contact Stefanie Meyer.

Application deadline (dept.): 29 September 2023

New **RoadAI competition:** "The participants will be provided with data from a road construction site in Viken including GPS data from dump trucks, machine data including daily fuel consumption, and drone maps of the construction site. [...] The challenge is to demonstrate how the data can be exploited for road construction to become more sustainable. [...]"

Find more information about the competition here. There will be a Q&A webinar on 14 August.

Submission deadline: 10 September 2023

Forskningsrådet

New **AURORA:** "The AURORA mobility programme contributes to establishing and expanding contact between research organizations in Norway and corresponding organizations in France. The purpose is to strengthen European research collaboration under Horizon Europe."

Application deadline: 13 September 2023

Sabbatical: All at least 50%, permanently employed professors and associate professors can apply for a sabbatical and, if relevant, related travel funds.

Application deadline for the next academic year: 1 October 2023

Forskningsrådet

New **FRIPRO:** The Research Council of Norway has published information about the upcoming FRIPRO (groundbreaking research) calls on their website.

- Researcher Project for Experienced Scientists (FRIPRO)
- Researcher Project for Early Career Scientists (FRIPRO)
- Three-year Researcher Project with International Mobility (FRIPRO)

It is anticipated that there will be an info meeting in September, and that the calls will open in October (see the timeline in the calls). These calls will have no explicit submission deadline. Please also note the new criteria regarding waiting period after submission and quarantine depending on the evaluation score. In addition, there are new eligibility criteria for the applicant PI as well as restrictions for researchers who have an ongoing FRIPRO project.

Application deadline: open-ended (to be opened in October)

Update **CAS project:** "The Centre for Advanced Study (CAS) invites researchers to pursue excellent, fundamental, curiosity-driven research in Oslo for one academic year. Assemble your international dream team of prominent researchers and apply for a research stay at CAS.

Only faculty members who hold permanent, full-time, tenured academic positions at CAS' partner institutions in Norway are eligible to apply. The applicants will function as principal investigator (PI) and will assemble and lead their research group at CAS."

Application deadline: 18 October 2023

In case there are several applicants, the department may need to prioritize. We therefore ask everyone who wants to apply, to let us know latest by 1 September 2023!

Forskningsrådet

Update **INFRASTRUCTURE:** The Research Council has updated its information about the main call for Funding for Research Infrastructure of National Importance. Please note that you can submit a proposal only if you had submitted a project outline in June.

Application deadline: 15 November 2023

On 13 September 10.00 am, the Research Council is also holding a webinar about the upcoming call. Registration deadline: 13 September, 8.00 am.

Update **NORPART:** "NORPART shall enhance the quality of higher education in Norway and selected partner countries in the Global South through academic cooperation and mutual student mobility."

Application deadline: NORPART-utlysningen 2023 er utsatt til våren 2024.

ERC 2024: The ERC has published their Work Programme for 2024. Please note that it contains a few substantial changes as compared to previous years, as you can find out more about by reading this press release and/or by contacting Stefanie Meyer.

The upcoming submission deadlines for ERC proposals are:

- StG-2024: 24 Oct 2023
- CoG-2024: 12 Dec 2023
- AdG-2024: 29 Aug 2024
- SyG-2024: 8 Nov 2023

New **TMS Starting Grants 2024 - Nomination of applicants at the Department of Informatics:** The TMS Starting Grant programme is a highly competitive and prestigious funding mechanism designed to help UiB in recruiting and/or retaining talented young researchers. The application process has several stages, starting with the nomination of applicants by the department (and faculty). We ask all research groups to send their suggestions for applicants to the head of department, who will select up to two candidates that will get the opportunity to apply for a TMS Starting Grant the following year (2024).

More detailed information has been sent to all scientific staff and Postdocs at the department via email.

Deadline: 1 December 2023. Please send the required documentation via email to the head of department, cc head of research section.

New Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)

"The Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) is the European reply to the need to boost investments in critical technologies in Europe.

STEP seeks to reinforce, leverage and steer EU funds – existing and new – to investments in deep and digital, clean and bio technologies in the EU, and in people who can implement those technologies into the economy."

source: STEP

We encourage all our groups to look carefully at the work programs for 2023-2024 and identify relevant topics. For questions, please do not hesitate to contact Stefanie Meyer.

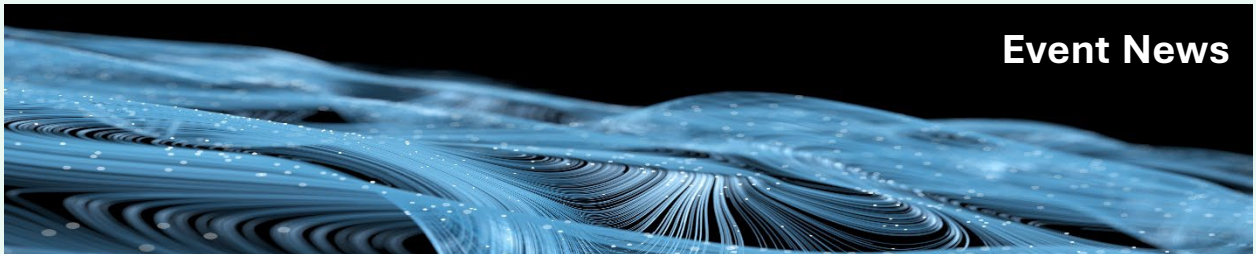
19.03.2024
Fundamentals of Software Engineering

19.03.2024
Explainable and Robust AI (AI Data and Robotics Partnership)

20.11.2024
Post-quantum cryptography transition

21.01.2025
Critical technologies for the future ocean energy farms

You can find all work programs here: Horizon Europe Reference Documents



Proposal writing course for PhD candidates and Postdocs

If you would like to learn more about writing a competitive research grant application and gain insight into clear and concise writing, then join us for this introductory course on **16-17 October** here at the Department of Informatics! We are aiming for a two-day event composed of lectures and some exercises. The course is open to PhD candidates enrolled in the ICT Research School and Postdocs at the Department of Informatics. **Registration** **deadline**: 30 August 2023.

New Intelligente Bergen 2023

"Konferansen Intelligente Bergen har som mål å samle næringsliv, offentleg sektor og studentar for å styrke og framme vår regions posisjon som nasjonalt leiande innan forsking og bruk av kunstig intelligens." **Event**: 3 November 2023, Bergen. Registration is open!

NORBIS activities

Upcoming activities

Course: Microbiome data science with R/Bioconductor

Time: October 9-12, 9 am-4pm

Place: University of Bergen

Course responsible: Dr. Rajesh Shigdel and Prof. Leo Lathi

Registration form: HERE

Program: This course provides an introduction to microbiome data integration and analysis with R/Bioconductor, a popular open-source environment for scientific data analysis.

Target audience: PhD, Postdoc, and researchers who wish to develop their skills in microbiome data science.

More information about this on our course website: https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/courses/

MOL8008 - Bioinformatics methods for next generation sequencing analysis

Dates: 2 – 6 October 2023.

Location: St.Olavs Hospital/NTNU, Trondheim.

Course responsible: Morten Beck Rye, NTNU.

Evaluation: Report based with grade pass/fail.

Course code: MOL8008

Registration: HERE. If you wish to earn credits, you will find information about this HERE.

Course description

The course will introduce bioinformatic approaches, tools and pipelines for computational analyses of Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) data. Focus will be on analysis methods for coding and non-coding RNA from RNA-seq, and transcription factors and epigenetic markers from ChIP-Seq. The course will cover strategies, methods and workflows used for analyses of such data, including mapping to reference genomes, feature extraction, and statistical analysis.

For more information: https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/courses/

SAVE THE DATE!

Workshop: Comparing genomes: Genome assembly and annotation, and hypothesis testing in comparative genomics.

Time: 1-5 April, 2024

Location: University of Oslo or University of Bergen

Workshop responsible: José Cerca (UiO), Ole Tørrensen (UiO), Inge Jonassen (UiB)

Workshop description

In this workshop, we will cover the technical principles of genome assembly, annotation, and genome comparison. We will explore the techniques related to genome sequencing, the software and strategies used for genome assembly and annotation. Following that, we will delve into comparative genomics, focusing on fundamental concepts such as genomic structural features (transposable elements, genes, centromeres), orthologs, and functional characterization of genes. Through this, participants will gain the necessary skills to test hypotheses in the field of comparative genomics.

For more information, visit our workshop website: https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/workshops/

We have more courses that will be opened for registration soon so save the date!

- **Metabolic pathway analysis** - January/February 2024 at University of Tromsø, two weeks by Ines Heiland.

Travel funding from NORBIS

Are you NORBIS member and in need funding to go to an international course or conference? NORBIS are happy to announce that we have a limited fund available for travel for our members for these activities. If you like to know more, please visit our website: https://norbis.w.uib.no/travel-funding-f...-and-conferences/

Funding for arranging courses and workshops

Do you have a course you like to organize under the NORBIS umbrella but in need of funding? Our call for courses is open now: https://norbis.w.uib.no/activities/proposals/

For more information, please see our webpage: https://norbis.w.uib.no