



STRATEGY

2023–2030

Department of Government



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN



Photo: Eivind Senneset

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Photo: Janne F. Lønne

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Government is a broad political science department. The department emphasizes the study of public policy, organisation and administration, political behaviour, democracy and participation, policy design, and institutions at the local, national, and international levels. The department's research and education provide knowledge on political processes and institutions, public administration, the relationship between the state and citizens, the welfare state, and the relationship between law and politics. We study politics and public administration both in Norway and in a European and global context. The department aims to be among the leading academic environments in Norway and the Nordic countries within its field and to excel internationally. The department provides students and staff with an open, inclusive, and welcoming environment.

About us

As of April 1st, 2023, the department has a scientific staff of 26 in permanent positions, including 15 Professors, 9 Associate Professors, and 2 Assistant Professors. 24 are employed in 100 % temporary scientific positions, including 5 Postdoctoral fellows, 15 Ph.D.-candidates, one researcher, and 3 research assistants. The department also has several employees in adjunct positions (Professor II or Associate Professor II), research assistants in part-time positions, and enrolled Ph.D. candidates who are employed at other institutions.

In the academic year 2022/2023, the department has over 400 students, separated into three study programs: A Norwegian bachelor's program and a Norwegian master's program in political science/public administration, and an English-language master's program in «Politics and Governance of Global Challenges».

The department contributes to the teacher education at the University of Bergen and has an extensive contract-based continuing education portfolio through a more than 20-year collaboration with the labour unions LO Stat and FLT/Addisco which incorporates a recently established master's program in administrative policy. The department also leads an Executive master's program in public administration for employees in the Norwegian central administration together with NHH Norwegian School of Economics

and the Faculty of Law and the Department of Economics at the University of Bergen starting in 2023 and contributes to an Executive master's program in municipal leadership together with the Faculty of Law and the Department of Economics.

In 2023, the department has the following five research groups:

- Governing global challenges
- Knowledge, politics and organization
- Citizens and democracy
- Political organization and multi-level governance
- Law, politics and welfare

The composition and academic focus of the research groups are dynamic and may change over time. Research group leaders are elected by members of the research group, who also constitute the department's strategic research committee.

Three centres with significant research and network activities are organized under the department:

- Centre for Research on Discretion and Paternalism (DIPA)
- Centre on Law and Social Transformation (LawTransform)
- The Digital Social Science Core Facility (DIGSSCORE)

The department participates in many important national, European, and international research networks, and has a significant portfolio of externally funded projects. This includes, i.e., four European Research Council (ERC) projects (one ERC Starting Grant and three ERC Consolidator Grants), a partnership in an EU Horizon Europe project, several research projects funded by the Norwegian Research Council, and several network projects supported by different funding sources.

About the strategy

This strategy is based on the University's and the Faculty of Social Sciences' overarching priorities, as well as the Faculty of Social Sciences' more specific goals and priorities. It has been developed and thoroughly discussed in various forums since the autumn of 2021, in regular meetings of the management team (incl. the head of the department, deputy head of the department, and the head of teaching), in joint staff seminars in 2021 and 2022, in meetings between the department leadership and research group leaders in the department's strategic research committee in 2022, with students in the student organization DEMOS in 2023, and ultimately in the Department Council in February 2023.

The strategy follows the strategy period for the Faculty of Social Sciences and the University of Bergen and applies to the period 2023–2030.

The strategy consists of four parts:

- Research
- Education
- Workplace and work environment
- Communication and dissemination



RESEARCH

Main aim

The department produces solid and ground-breaking research of high relevance and international quality. The department values academic freedom highly and protects scientific credibility and independence. The department facilitates creativity, innovation, and good ethical standards in research. The department stimulates an attractive research environment, attracts highly qualified researchers, and participates in networks that promote collaboration with other outstanding research environments nationally and internationally.

Sub-goals

Stimulate individual researchers and research groups at the department to develop both large and small research projects of high scientific quality and societal relevance through strategic prioritization of resources.

- Ensure that research is anchored in good research practice and conducted in accordance with ethical rules and guidelines, as well as regulations concerning privacy in research.
- Protect the scientific staff's free research time.
- Work to ensure that all scientific staff publishes articles in recognized and relevant scientific journals and textbooks with excellent national and international publishers.
- Encourage all scientific staff members to regularly attend national and international academic conferences.
- Work to increase competence in scientific research methods among the staff.
- Work to strengthen competence in research management among the staff.
- Support larger research initiatives supported by the Norwegian Research Council, i.e., Centre of Excellence (SFF) and Research Infrastructure.

- Support applications for EU funding (ERC and thematic calls in the EU), and applications to the Norwegian Research Council.
- Work to establish and institutionalize *Coordinated Online Panels for Research on Democracy and Governance in Norway* (KODEM) and continue national coordination of the European Social Survey (ESS) at DIGSSCORE.
- Work to enable employees in temporary scientific positions to apply for external research funding.
- Encourage interdisciplinary research and participation in interdisciplinary initiatives at the University of Bergen.
- Stimulate opportunities for guest researchers to stay at the department who can contribute to the development of ideas and further research collaboration.

EDUCATION

Main aim

The department provides research-based education in political science of outstanding quality and relevance to big societal challenges and educates competent graduates who actively participate in society and the workforce.

The teaching covers politics, public administration, organisation, and institutional knowledge at the local, national, and international levels – not limited to, but with a particular focus on – political institutions, public policy, and public administration. The education covers a wide range of political science topics and issues related to politics and administration, political systems and practices, public administration, organisation, and governance. It covers the relationship between different levels of government and authority, the relationship between the state and the citizen, between law and politics, as well as democracy, participation, and political attitudes and behaviour – in Norway, at the European level, and globally. It also includes a wide range of social science methods and theory. The department's comprehensive curriculum covers a wide range of topics and methods, equipping students with a strong education that is highly valued by employers.

Sub-goals

- Stimulate pedagogical creativity and innovation through continuous development and updating of the teaching portfolio and the staff's pedagogical competence.
- Consistently strive to enhance the quality of education by conducting regular evaluations of programs and courses, and taking action based on the findings.
- Facilitate and encourage more student-active learning.
- Proactively engage in efforts to attract and retain highly motivated and engaged students who demonstrate a strong commitment to their studies.



Photo: Silje Katrine Robinson

- Foster a positive learning environment, promote social well-being, and support student's personal and academic growth through a variety of student activities, while also encouraging their participation in democratic decision-making processes at the university.
- Ensure good cooperation and dialogue with students regarding the development of the study programs and academic-social initiatives.
- Take active steps to demonstrate the practical relevance of the education provided, and its applicability in the modern workforce.
- Work to increase internationalization and encourage more students at the department to participate in exchange programs abroad.
- Maintain and further develop the department's extensive continuing education program.
- Work to expand the department's engagement in the University's teacher education program.
- Provide opportunities for all Ph.D. fellows and postdoctoral fellows employed at the department to gain teaching experience.
- Offer regular Ph.D. courses and Ph.D. seminars and explore the possibility of developing a research school in political science.



Photo: Torhild Dahl

WORKPLACE AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Main goal

The department is known as a dynamic and appealing workplace that fosters academic creativity and innovation and is characterised by a motivated, engaged, and highly skilled community of employees and students. The department maintains strong structures for teaching and research, providing a safe and supportive working environment that prioritises openness, trust, inclusion, and participation. Collaboration is valued, and the work environment is characterised by respectful dialogue, a spirit of collegial sharing, academic integrity, and a shared commitment to excellence in both research and teaching.

Sub-goals

- Implement targeted recruitment and professional development of outstanding researchers and teachers.
- Ensure openness and encourage involvement in strategic decisions.
- Maintain an appealing work environment that supports the ongoing professional development of all employees throughout their careers.
- Increase diversity and ensure inclusion as well as a good gender balance among scientific staff.
- Have an organization of research and teaching that facilitates inclusion and participation.

- Consider advertising permanent scientific positions within important strategic areas for the department and consider advertising tenure-tracked positions to attract younger talents.
- Organise academic seminars open to all staff members, featuring both invited guests and staff members presenting and discussing current research and academic topics.
- Continuously work towards a good and safe working environment.
- Maintain procedures to ensure that new employees are warmly welcomed and effectively integrated into the department.
- Encourage and facilitate regular academic and social events for the department's staff to foster community and engagement among colleagues.
- Strive for high-quality and appropriate physical spaces that meet the needs of the department and its activities.

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Main aim

The department has a well-defined and prominent profile in both Norwegian and international contexts, providing comprehensive and clear information about its study programs that facilitates the recruitment of highly qualified students and employees. The department prioritizes the dissemination of research results to the political-administrative system and the general public, thereby making significant contributions to an informed and knowledge-based public debate. Furthermore, the department maintains effective communication both internally and externally.

The key target audiences are new and existing students, their employers, alumni, colleagues and peers, public and private decision-makers, national and international media, as well as the department's employees.

Sub-goals

- Make the department's research and study programs visible to students, colleagues, key decision-makers, public administration, and society at large.
- Ensure that comprehensive and up-to-date information about the department's study programs and courses is readily available to both prospective and current students.
- Emphasize the study programs' connection to the labour market and their relevance for job opportunities after graduation.
- Encourage and support dissemination that showcases scientific results, research, and the education provided at the department.
- Motivate staff to communicate and discuss their research in relevant professional forums locally, nationally, and internationally.



Photo: Eivind Senneset

- Participate in relevant and reputable public meeting places and debate forums, and facilitate dialogue and contact with citizens, authorities, and society.
- Encourage participation in public committees, expert groups, and other forums that utilize knowledge and research.
- Work to strengthen dedicated administrative communication resources.
- Maintain strong connections with the department's alumni through regular communication and opportunities for networking.



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