



PLAN OF ACTION FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

2011 – 2015

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN





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Over the past few years, the University of Bergen has climbed international ranking lists, increased its number of international publications, and been awarded several major international research grants. Numerous members of the academic staff are involved in international research and education collaborations, and the University has achieved its goal in student studies abroad. Recent figures show that 20 percent of all University graduates will have spent some time abroad during their program of study and in 2010, approximately 850 students came to UiB from educational institutions abroad. Most of these students were exchange students, though there were also many degree students. Of the University's doctoral candidates, around 30 percent come from other countries.

The University of Bergen's official Strategic Plan outlines its overall objective for the period up to 2015: strengthening its position as an internationally recognized research university. As part of this effort, fundamental research shall aim at the highest standards of academic freedom and excellence. In terms of quality and academic achievements, UiB aims to be comparable to other major research universities and its goal is to collaborate also with acclaimed research universities across the world. UiB's strengths and ability to win international recognition for its research serve as a basis from which to recruit highly qualified researchers and to create and develop attractive research-based degree programmes.

Another important goal for UiB is that our students and staff shall contribute actively towards meeting current global challenges. Through our research and expertise, we shall also work towards resolving some of these challenges. The University has a long tradition of research collaboration with universities in Africa, Asia and Latin America and shall continue these collaborative efforts.

The measure of the University's success as a major international research university is its performance in international rankings, in international publishing, in winning grants in international competitions, and in the attractiveness of our academic staff and students as partners in international research and educational programmes.

The Strategic Plan for the University of Bergen stipulates that there shall be a continued emphasis on the international dimensions of research, education, and administration. The present Plan of Action outlines specific means by which to achieve this goal, with a particular focus on the key areas of research and education. This document should be read in conjunction with the University's Strategic Plan document. In what follows, specific disciplines or subjects are not discussed, and faculties, departments and centres are not dealt with individually. Moreover, these various units vary with regard to their degree of internationalization and as a consequence face different challenges in the areas of international research, education, and collaboration in general.



This document thus provides general guidelines for the entire University which must be adapted locally. In some cases it may be necessary to set more ambitious goals, in others perhaps less ambitious ones.

The University of Bergen is aware that global student recruitment trends are changing dramatically and that there is fierce competition for the best, and the best-paying, students. At the international level, the number of students is increasing rapidly, partly due to higher enrolment figures in many Asian countries. Many international students apply for admission to degree programmes in Europe and the US. Norwegian universities, which offer higher education without tuition fees, have noted a considerable increase in the number of applicants. These figures are expected to rise even further after the introduction of tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students in several of our neighbour countries. It is vital that the University monitor both these global trends and the developing understanding of education as an international commodity. The question of how the University and the country of Norway will face these changes will become increasingly relevant in the years to come. The Bologna process and other national and international commitments are also very important in this context, and UiB must, wherever possible, carefully assess how new requirements shall be implemented.

The Norwegian educational authorities and the Research Council of Norway set political and financial parameters which affect geographical

priorities in international research and education schemes. Nordic and European collaboration has a natural priority, and particular emphasis has also been placed on strengthening ties to the US, Canada, Japan, China, Russia, India, South Africa and Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. The University of Bergen aligns itself with the national priorities to the extent that this is possible, given local research expertise and the priorities of the research communities themselves. In several of these areas, there is a basis for much closer collaboration than has been established thus far. At the same time, the University's own focus on development research may also imply that the University has international partners in geographical areas other than those singled out at the national level.

In order to promote good, foundational research, the University of Bergen must collaborate with other strong research groups and communities locally, regionally, and nationally, and at the same time promote collaborative efforts that contribute to a global increase in research capacity and expertise. In many cases working together with local and regional business communities will at the same time strengthen efforts towards internationalization or contributions to international research. Encouraging efforts of this type are an important part of the University's mission.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION AS DAILY PRACTICE

International research is a diverse enterprise, comprising participation in large-scale, internationally financed research and infrastructure projects, in smaller scale research projects, in cooperation through less formal agreements, and in international publication. All of these components are important for research quality, international visibility, and for meeting global commitments. At the same time, international research collaboration can help to create and foster a more international educational environment at home, while at the same time strengthening the research on which this education is based. For this reason, an educational component should be included in international research collaboration wherever this is possible. The University of Bergen must strive to see research and education in conjunction with one another, for example in the initiation of strategic partnerships.

- Stronger administrative support teams will be part of the effort towards professionalizing the University's grant application preparations. These efforts will cover applications for various grant types, including project coordinator responsibility for EU projects, ERC grants and infrastructure grants. Target: a clear increase in grants awarded over 2010. Responsible: Division of Research Management, University Departments. Time frame: end of 2015
- Good systems for project and finance management are a prerequisite for running large international research and education projects. It is essential that project management and the division of labour and responsibility are both clearly articulated and transparent. Responsible: Financial Services Office, Division of Research Management, and Division of Student Affairs, with University Faculties. Time frame: Clarification of tasks and responsibilities – 2011, implementation 2012

- A centrally financed, locally initiated scheme for adjunct professors and guest lecturers will be established in order to build expertise. The aim is to increase participation in international research collaboration. Responsible: University leadership, Division of Research Management, University Faculties. Time frame: Establish scheme by 2012.
- Faculties and Departments shall determine whether it is expedient to earmark a larger portion of their budgets for international research activities and publishing. Target: for the institution as a whole to increase its proportion of level two publications and the number of publications co-authored with foreign researchers by 10 percent over 2010 levels. Responsible: University Faculties, University Library.¹ Time frame: by end of 2015.
- The University of Bergen will facilitate the establishment and administration of joint MA and doctoral degrees in areas where such cooperation will fortify strategic research collaboration and ensure students a better and more internationally oriented education. Target: award joint degrees with major collaborating institutions. Responsible: Division of Student Affairs, Division of Research Management, University Departments
- The University of Bergen will strive to integrate many of the strategic schemes and measures available nationally for efforts in international research and education. The University will promote Norwegian participation in international programmes that encourage this kind of integration. Target: effective, efficient and targeted strategic use of relevant national and international programmes and measures. Responsible: University

¹ This requires a survey of all publications co-authored with foreign scholars.



- leadership, University Faculties. Time frame: throughout period
- The exchange quota scheme is included as part of the University's strategic efforts in the area of development-related research and expertise. At the University of Bergen, this programme is seen in conjunction with other national and international research and education programmes (especially NUFU/NOMA programmes). The University will continue to promote the use of such programmes as a strategic means of strengthening international partnerships. Responsible: Division of Student Affairs. Time frame: throughout period
- The Bergen Summer Research School is an important arena for international doctoral training and interaction with global partners and partners in the Southern Hemisphere. This programme needs a sustainable funding

- plan for the long term, and will be evaluated towards this end in 2011. Responsible: Division for Research Management.
- All of the University's institutional networks, memberships and agreements will be reviewed in order to determine their contribution towards international cooperation in education and research in priority countries and areas. Collaborative agreements that are conducive to both research and education will be given highest priority. A separate plan will be set up to develop and improve collaboration with these strategically selected partner institutions. Any agreements which are dormant will be assessed and may be terminated. Responsible: Division for Student Affairs, Division for Research Management, University Faculties. Time frame: 2011, annually

QUALITY ASSURED INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY: ACADEMIC FOUNDATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Being an internationally recognized research university requires, among other things, that our academic staff are visible in important international research arenas and in international publishing. In addition, it requires student and staff mobility and exchange programs that enable students, teachers and administrative personnel to gain broad international exposure, experience, and expertise. Visiting students and students travelling abroad have academic opportunities that they wouldn't have at home. Mobility is thus an important element of a university's internationalization effort and it requires considerable resources as well as a clear allocation of responsibility for the various elements that make mobility possible.

One important measure of the University of Bergen's status as an internationally acclaimed research university is the extent to which foreign students and scholars wish to come here. The University aims to be an open and welcoming institution for all students and staff, regardless of the length of their stay. The various departments and centres are asked to ensure that all visitors are well taken care of when they arrive. It is the University's aim to establish and maintain long-term international relationships and networks. The objective is that all Faculties and Departments should have a set of core institutions/universities with which it collaborates. Focussing on a select set will enable the organization to maintain higher quality in its exchange programs at the same time as it may reduce the administrative and academic costs of international cooperation.

- The University must streamline the allocation of responsibility for the various tasks involved in sending out our own and

receiving visiting members of staff, students, and other guests. There shall be a division of labour and responsibility between central administrative offices, the various University Faculties, and the individual Departments. Responsible: University leadership. Time frame: Mapping the various elements and areas of responsibility will be carried out in the spring of 2011 and the new plan will be implemented in the autumn of the same year, at the latest.

- The University aims to improve the academic bases for its exchange programmes. Each individual department should establish a set of recommended exchange programme options for its degree students. These programmes should, preferably, be linked to institutions with which there is also research collaboration. A strong administrative support team at the Division of Student Affairs will help University Faculties and Departments in these efforts. Target: All degree programmes shall include recommended student exchange options. Responsible: University Departments, Division of Student Affairs. Time frame: 2012
- In order to tighten the link between education and research in our internationalization efforts, the University aims to improve the balance between incoming and outgoing students. This means that we will work to increase the number of our students going abroad on Erasmus programmes and increase the number of visitors arriving through bilateral agreements. We will make active use of existing agreements to achieve this goal and also establish new agreements which





can strengthen collaboration in research and education. Target: A minimum of 30 percent of all UiB graduates shall have had a study stay abroad. Responsible: University Departments, University Faculties, Division of Student Affairs

- The International Week event, which has been organized twice in collaboration between student government and the Division for Student Affairs, will be continued.
- The University will develop a recruitment plan for international students, built on the premise of combining research and education. Responsible: Division of Student Affairs. Time frame: 2011
- International exchange schemes for administrative and technical staff provide opportunities for networking and the exchange of ideas across international borders. The University will promote schemes for this type of exchange also. The current Bergen Staff Mobility Week will become a permanent event for incoming international visitors. Responsible: Department of Human Resources. Time frame: throughout period
- All doctoral candidates should have a relatively extended stay abroad during their grant period. The objective is to promote international-level research, reap international experience, establish international contacts and build international networks. In some cases, a research group or Department may also find other means of achieving these ends. Responsible: University Departments. Time frame: throughout period
- In order to create an international environment for their doctoral students, all units involved in doctoral education are encouraged to make the best possible use of national and international schemes to enable foreign doctoral students to come to the University of Bergen. Responsible: University Departments. Time frame: throughout period
- The University of Bergen shall adapt and improve the services provided through

its Euraxcess contact, International Staff Services (ISS). Services offered here must also include the visitor's family. ISS must be highly visible and be extended to encompass a welcome centre to provide guidance and assistance to staff, visitors and their families. ISS shall be combined with the service centre for international mobility. This centre shall provide information, advice, and assistance for UiB staff and foreign visitors, members of staff, and doctoral students in practical matters associated with international mobility to and from the University. Responsibility: Department of Human Resources. Time frame: 2011–2012

- The University will work towards the establishment of a service centre for foreign employees in Bergen. Responsible: University leadership. Time frame: 2011–2012
- An important element of providing a proper welcome for visitors is the provision of housing. The University aims to ensure that scholars visiting UiB are offered housing. The availability of short-term rental units for foreign guests will be improved by the acquisition (through purchase or leasing) of several new units (apartments or studio apartments). A 'housing calendar' will be established so that University Departments can check housing availability through an online booking system. Responsible: University leadership, Department of Estate and Facilities Management. Time frame: Starting 2011, throughout period
- The University of Bergen currently receives about 3000 applications per year from foreign students seeking admission to our MA programmes. In order to improve the quality of our admissions process and to reduce the University's administrative costs, the University will support efforts towards the formation of a national admissions service for foreign students. Responsible: University leadership.

BETTER LANGUAGE SKILLS

The University continues to face the challenge of developing Norwegian as an academic language while at the same time establishing a practice of using English as a parallel language in research, teaching, and administration. Even so, internationalization does not entail that all activities that are not conducted in Norwegian must be conducted in English. The University believes that staff members and students travelling to countries where the main language spoken is not English should be able to take a basic course in the host country's language, and that people on extended stays here should have an opportunity to learn Norwegian. For years University policy has been that after two years of employment, all employees shall be proficient enough in Norwegian to teach in that language. It is important that the University determine whether the language instruction provided is sufficient to reach that goal.

The University has adopted an official language policy and has implemented measures to ensure quality language use in both of the official forms of written Norwegian and in English (see University Board item 75/07). It is extremely important that the language courses offered to University employees (English for academic purposes, English for administrative purposes, Norwegian for foreign employees and students) be extensive enough, that the Departments or units where people work make it possible for staff and students to attend, and that all members of staff consider it their personal responsibility to be able to communicate in an international environment.

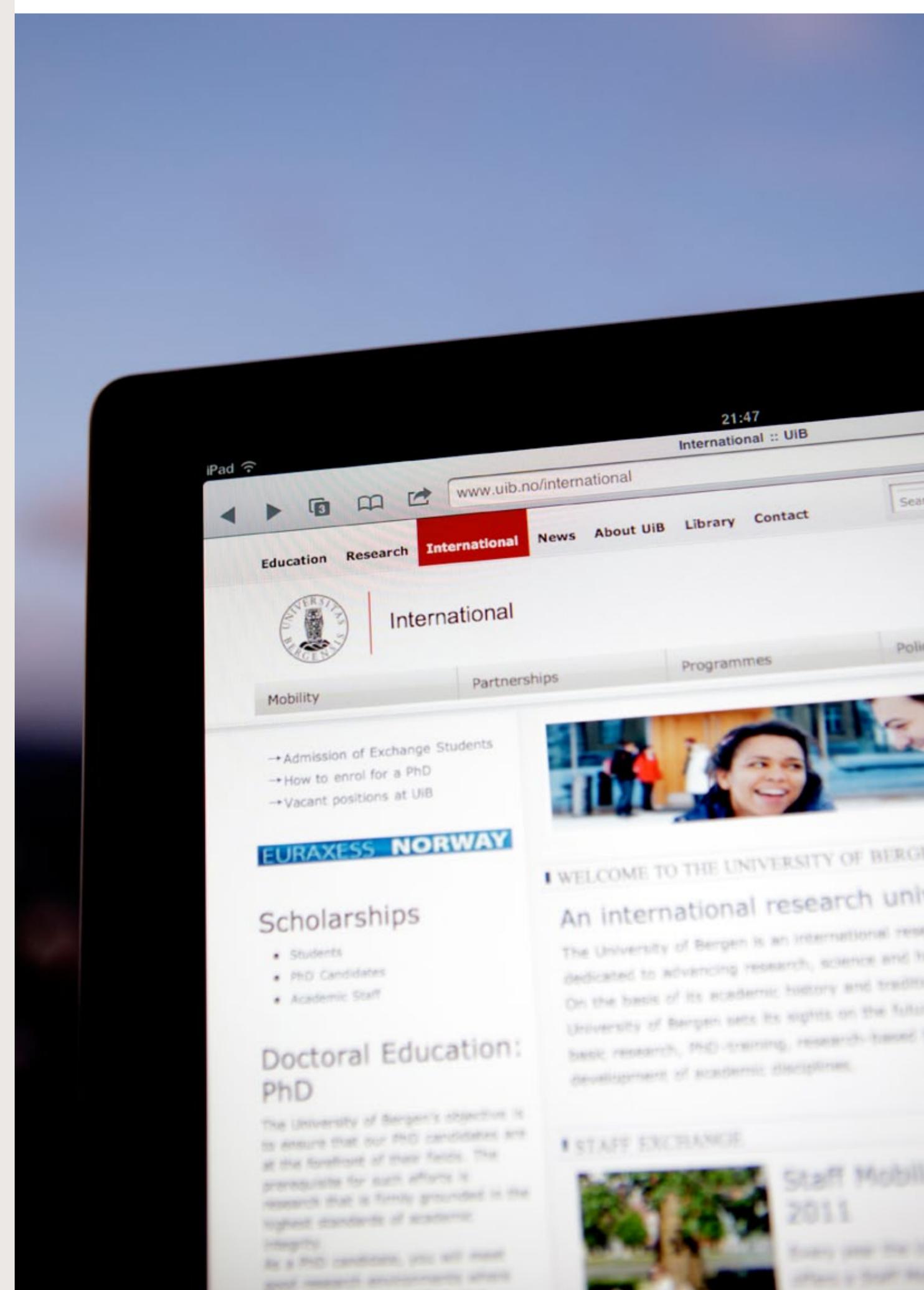
- Each University Department shall review its portfolio of courses taught in foreign languages with an aim to ensuring that there is an attractive range of courses available to non Norwegian-speaking students. At the same time, these courses should also be relevant for Norwegian students, thus enabling a sound academic process of integration. Responsible: University Departments. Time frame: 2011
- The University aims to increase the volume of publishing in English-language journals at level two and in international journals in general. As part of this process, the University must provide good language services, including editing, to cover all academic fields. Responsible: Department of Human Resources. Time frame: throughout period
- The University aims to provide summer courses in Norwegian for foreign students. During the period of effect of this plan, this programme will be run on a trial basis starting in 2012. Responsible: Division of Student Affairs and the Humanities Faculty
- In order to reach the University's goal of close links between research and education and balanced student exchanges, University students must also participate in exchanges with countries where English is not the primary language spoken. Ideally, the University would be able to offer language courses in several languages in addition to our regular programmes of study. As a first step, the University must assess the need for, the resource base and the feasibility of this kind of programme. A pilot project involving German will be initiated in 2012. German is a natural starting point, as a number of University groups collaborate with German partners and Germany sends the highest number of Erasmus students here. Responsible: Division of Student Affairs, Department of Human Resources (language services).
- Taking its cue from a number of other universities, including the University of Oslo, UiB will implement an online tandem learning system to enhance both Norwegian and foreign students language skills. Responsible: Division for Student Affairs. Time frame: 2011



UNIVERSITY PRESENTATION AND IMPROVED INFORMATION FLOW

Information and presentation are two different things. Yet information is in many ways also part of the presentation of our University. It is important to keep this in mind in many different areas, for instance in the development of the University website and when participating in international events of all kinds. It is also important in this connection that the University have a unified policy for reference to and use of international ranking results in its own presentational materials and practices.

- All promotional material for the University shall be reviewed with an aim to ensuring that a fair and comprehensive picture of the University is presented. The University shall also articulate a plan for the use of promotional materials. Responsible: Division of Communication, along with University Departments and leadership. Time frame: 2011
- The University frequently hosts delegations seeking information about the institution. It is important that the responsibility for all elements of hosting such visits be clearly specified. General guidelines for receiving delegations shall be established. Responsible: University leadership. Time frame: 2011
- The 'international' section of the University website shall at all times provide full and updated information in English and Norwegian on matters pertaining to University research, education, and personnel policy. Responsible: Division of Communication, other relevant units. Time frame: 2011 and throughout period
- The most important web pages shall be published in Norwegian and English, and University Faculties and Departments are responsible for ensuring that relevant information is also provided in English on their local sites. It is important to determine the resources necessary to maintain bilingual websites (Norwegian/English), and measures must be taken to provide the necessary support. Responsible: Division of Communication, University Faculties and Departments. Time frame: throughout period
- The University of Bergen will continue its efforts to make research results available to all, ensuring that all relevant licence and copyright issues are resolved. Responsible: University Library
- All information on important sources of funding for stays abroad for all types of students or staff shall be made easily electronically available. Responsible: Division of Communication, in collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Research Affairs. Time frame: throughout period
- The University shall enable better use of existing networks, centres, and agreements through a more professional organization and management of information about the most important schemes and programmes. Target: Broader UiB staff and student participation in the most important networks. Responsible: Division of Research Affairs, Division of Student Affairs. Time frame: throughout period





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