

Evaluation of the Humanities in Norway

Report from Panel 4 – Modern and Classical Languages,
Literatures and Area Studies

Evaluation
Division for Science

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Summary

The panel for Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies covers a linguistically and culturally large and diverse domain of expertise. Of the six areas that were assessed by this panel, English is the largest in terms of publications: it produced 32% of the publications within the panel, and 34% of the publication points. Classical Studies produced the smallest amount of publications: 6%, but 8% of the publication points – this is inversely proportional to German studies: 8% of the publications, 6% of the publication points.

The panel finds that some of the institutions have developed clear and well-functioning strategies for research in these areas, mainly by prioritising some of them by making clear choices and linking them with financial incentives. In most cases, these choices also imply a thematic focus on research with societal impact, instead of on a broad range of topics connected to a (language) culture. Asian and African studies as well as Slavonic studies are successful in this respect. This strategy also ties in with the development of national and international funding instruments. Ultimately, this leads to larger interdisciplinary groups with easier access to research money.

In general, the quantity and quality of the research is very good to excellent, although there are exceptions. There is a tendency for the strongest research in the modern language areas to be found in linguistics rather than in literature. Research in linguistics is also often published in English, and it is less culture-dependent than literature.

The recruitment of staff, especially to PhD positions, has a clear international dimension and is therefore competitive.

The panel observed that the strengths of some of the areas are offset by the weaknesses of some of the others. In areas in which staff are mainly recruited for teaching positions, research becomes fragmented. This is mainly the case in the cultural disciplines of the modern languages. For Modern Languages and Literatures (including English) the orientation of research tends not to be in line with teaching programmes (English language and literature; French/German language and literature).

Staff are more frequently hired for their teaching, rather than research expertise. This makes it difficult to see research strategies in English Language and Literature or in other Modern Language and Literature research. Only in those cases in which the literatures of various target languages find each other in a common research interest is it possible to develop a research strategy – and then the problem is often compatibility with teaching programmes.

For Area Studies and Classical Languages and Literature, this problem exists to a lesser extent, since teaching programmes in these fields are traditionally multi- or interdisciplinary, and research groups can be more closely aligned with the teaching mission.

Some areas are not prioritised by their institutions and are not organised along research lines, and staff are hired primarily for their teaching expertise. In such cases, this could ultimately result in the demise of these areas. Some areas profit from preferential local institutional funding, resulting from a sustainable research strategy in both a national and international context. Data show that Linguistics is able to obtain more than twice as much funding as Literature from external sources, such as the RCN. However, RCN data are organised by discipline, not area.

The proportion of publications with external national and international co-authors in the areas covered by this panel is very much in line with the proportion for the Humanities as a whole in Norway: However, English and German do less well, whereas Slavonic Studies performs above average. Slavonic also has the highest percentage of Level 2 publications, whereas Romance studies have the lowest share of Level 2 publications. Book chapters are an important medium in all the areas, especially in German studies (51%), while the figure for Slavonic studies is only 25%.

In the strong fields, there is significant evidence of productive networking at the national and international level. Areas that are not well-organised or cannot profit from organisational structures participate less in national and international collaboration. In the smaller areas, however, individual mobility is still often very common.

There are significant differences in how the different areas relate to societal challenges. Whereas all areas show effort in the dissemination of research, some are capable of real cooperation with other sectors. Research institutes are better positioned for this than universities, as the latter also have to staff teaching programmes, for example language programmes.

Scholars of literature who are not working in an interdisciplinary environment, and who study literature in languages other than English with few other colleagues, will normally not be able to engage with society at large, and will not receive much funding. However, the impact even those scholars have through teaching, and educating young people to become informed and critical citizens, should be taken into account when the value of their work is evaluated.

Knowledge that feeds into teaching is a genuine and important societal impact of Humanities research. Although there is a potential for research to have an impact on teaching, not all the institutions have a strategy in place for all areas to make this connection work.

Recommendations

Firstly, we see that, throughout the country, good research is stimulated through comparable measures and in the same areas. This strengthens the areas that are organised by research topics (with strong ties to societal challenges), and makes them bigger, better performing and better funded. One obvious recommendation would therefore be to further strengthen these areas, locally, nationally and, since this is an international trend, internationally.

However, the panel was concerned that some areas in Modern Languages and Literatures (Slavonic, Germanic, and, to a lesser degree, English) will ultimately expire, locally, nationally and, since this is an international trend, internationally. Our panel recommends that the Norwegian government consider the value of both strengthening already strong areas and urgently putting more effort and money into the others. However, this would not just mean strengthening research, but also restructuring teaching programmes, in order to build a structure that generates more possibilities for a research impact in teaching – and that attracts more students to these programmes

Thirdly, it is evident that some institutions primarily have a regional educational function. Even if teaching were to profit from research, does that necessarily mean that the staff working at those institutions have to carry out research? It might be more efficient and lead to better results if those institutions received funding to develop programmes and strategies to connect research and teaching, but without having to do the research themselves.

1 On the evaluation

One of the duties of the Research Council of Norway is to conduct field evaluations of Norwegian research, that is, evaluations of how entire fields or disciplines are performing in Norway. These have two purposes: to provide an international view and feedback on performance, and to support the development of research policy. By tradition, the evaluated field has been given an opportunity to form a committee to decide how to learn from and change practices based on the evaluation. In many cases, the RCN has then provided some funding to help implement measures proposed by the committee.

The practice of field evaluation is long established in Norway. In the past, such evaluations have confined themselves to one or a small number of individual disciplines, such as Philosophy and the History of Ideas, Law or History. In 2011, the RCN published a wider evaluation of Biology, Medicine and Healthcare. In 2015, it published an evaluation of the fundamental Engineering Sciences. In 2016 it launched this evaluation of the Humanities as a whole and it has more recently started a similar evaluation of the Social Sciences. This evaluation of the Humanities could potentially spearhead a new and even broader field evaluation practice.

1.1 Terms of Reference

The task of this evaluation is to

Review the scientific quality of Norwegian research in the Humanities in an international context

- Provide a critical review of the strengths and weaknesses of the fields of research within the humanities – nationally, at the institutional level and for a number of designated research groups
- Identify the research groups that have achieved a high international level in their research, or that have the potential to achieve such a level
- Investigate the extent of interdisciplinary research at the institutions and in the research groups
- Review the role of the Research Council of Norway in funding research activities in the humanities
- Investigate the connection between research and teaching activities
- Discuss the organisation of research activities and the role of the Humanities in the strategic plans of the evaluated institutions
- Assess the extent to which previous evaluations have been used by the institutions in their strategic planning
- Identify areas of research that need to be strengthened in order to ensure that Norway possesses the necessary competence in areas of national importance in future
- Discuss the societal impact of Humanities research in Norway in general and, in particular, its potential to address targeted societal challenges as defined in the Norwegian Government's Long-term Plan for Research and Higher education, and the EU framework programme Horizon 2020

The government's Long-term Plan for Research (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2014) prioritises the following areas

- The sea
- Climate, the environment and environmentally friendly energy
- Renewal of the public sector and more efficient welfare and health services
- Enabling technologies
- An innovative and flexible business sector, able to restructure as needed
- World-leading research groups

These priorities co-exist with a longer-term set of reforms aimed at increasing the quality of Norwegian research.

A recent analysis of the quality of Norwegian research as indicated by bibliometric evidence suggests that there are two dimensions to the need to improve quality (Benner, 2015). The average level of quality (measured by the field-normalised citation rate of Norwegian research as a whole) has risen to match that of Sweden, placing it among the stronger countries worldwide. However, Norway lacks research groups that publish in the most-cited 10% and 1% of articles worldwide. The Humanities are poorly served by bibliometric indicators, so Benner's analysis may be less applicable to the Humanities than to other fields, although it appears consistent with the judgements of the panel conducting this evaluation. Nonetheless, Norwegian research policy is likely to place increasing emphasis on the need not only further to raise the average quality, but also to develop and sustain some world-leading groups (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2014) (Hatlem, Melby, & Arnold, 2017). The focus on quality in this evaluation therefore responds to an important policy need.

At the same time, in Norway – as in other countries – there is also increasing pressure for research to be able to demonstrate its societal value. Both aspects are tackled in this evaluation.

1.2 The evaluation panels

The evaluation has been carried out by eight field panels comprising international peers, each of which evaluated one or more disciplines. The composition of the panels is shown in Appendix D. Their reports are published in separate volumes.

Panel 1 Aesthetic Studies

Panel 2 Nordic Languages and Linguistics

Panel 3 Nordic and Comparative Literature

Panel 4 Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies

Panel 5 Archaeology, History and Cultural Studies

Panel 6 Philosophy and Studies in Science and Technology

Panel 7 Religion and Theology

Panel 8 Media Studies

Table 1 shows which panels cover which disciplines.

The chairs of the panels have formed an overall evaluation panel – referred to in the Terms of Reference as the principal committee – which is responsible for reporting on the Humanities as a whole.

The tasks of the field panels specified in the terms of reference were to

- Evaluate research activities with respect to scientific quality, and national and international collaboration. Focus on research published in peer-reviewed publications

- Evaluate the relevance and impact of the evaluated research activities
- Evaluate how research activities are organised and managed
- Submit a report with specific recommendations for the future development of research within the subject fields encompassed by the panel, including means of improvement when necessary

Table 1 Overview of the field and panel structure

Panel	Panel name	Discipline
1	Aesthetic Studies	Dance
		Art History
		Musicology
		Theatre and Drama
2	Nordic Languages and Linguistics	Linguistics
		Nordic Language
		Norwegian as a Second Language
		Sámi and Finnish
		Sign Language and Interpretation
3	Nordic and Comparative Literature	Literature
		Nordic Literature
4	Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies	Asian and African Studies
		English Studies
		Classical Studies
		Romance Studies
		Slavonic Studies
		Germanic Studies

5	Archaeology, History and Cultural Studies	Archaeology and Conservation
		History
		Cultural Studies
6	Philosophy and Studies in Science and Technology	Philosophy and History of Ideas
		Science and Technology Studies
7	Religion and Theology	Theology and Religion
8	Media Studies	Media and Communication

Note 1: Researchers in History of Ideas were in most cases submitted to Panel 5

Note 2: The national academic council for Gender research is not included as RCN is planning a separate evaluation of Gender research in Norway

1.3 Methods and Limitations

1.3.1 Organisation of the evaluation

The evaluation addressed four different levels (Figure 1). At the highest level, this report evaluates the field of Humanities in Norway as a whole. To do so, it synthesises and analyses the reports of the eight discipline panels.

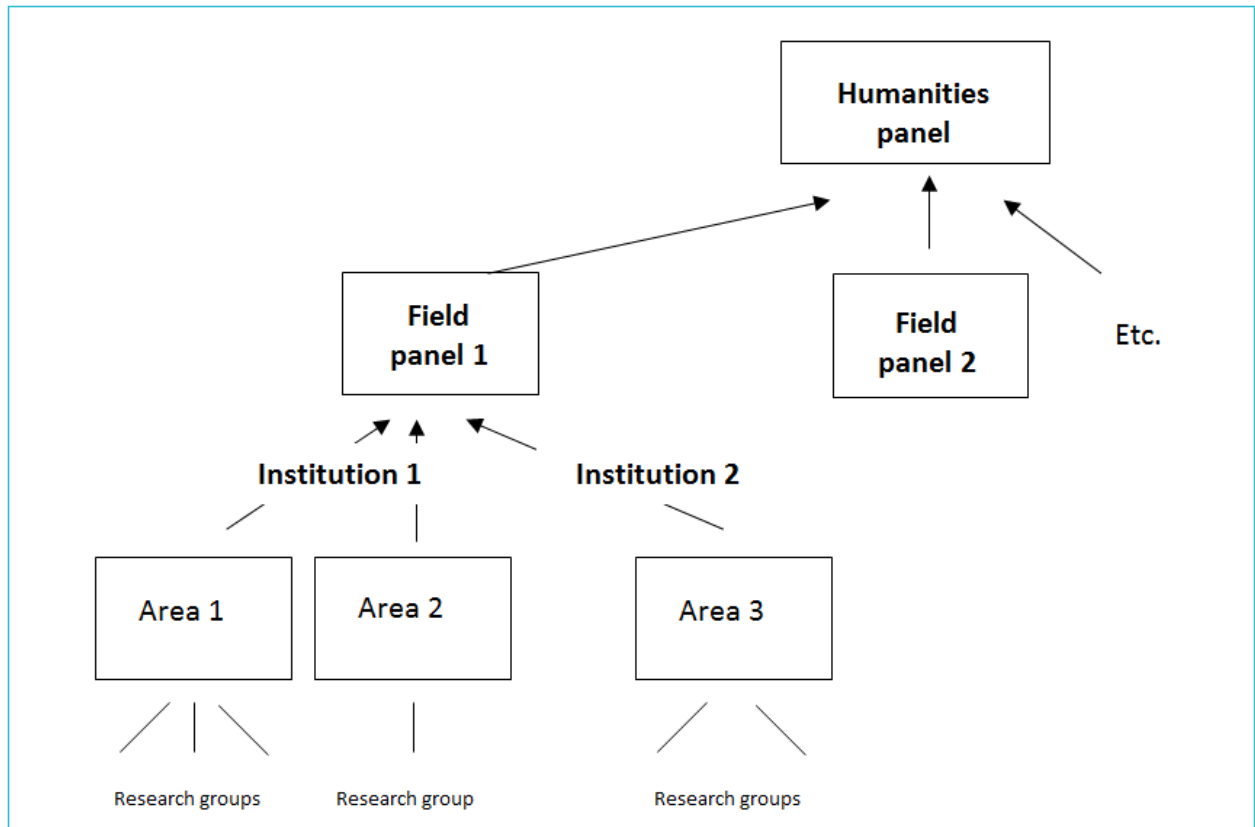
The division of the field of Humanities into panels was based on the established organisational structure of national academic councils (Nasjonale fagråd). There are 24 such academic councils, reflecting the historical development of research areas and teaching subjects within the Humanities in Norway. To avoid a very fragmented panel structure, the research areas of the academic councils were grouped into eight panels based on disciplinary similarities. For the purpose of this evaluation, the area of research and study covered by a specific academic council is referred to as a 'research area'.

The panels were asked to evaluate both research areas and research groups based on the following information.

- Each participating institution was asked to provide a list of its staff working within the Humanities and to indicate the most relevant research area for each staff member. The institutions also provided a self-assessment for each of the relevant panels, with a description of their research activities and results within each research area, as well as about the interplay of research and teaching and other societal impact.
- To support the panels' assessment of research areas, the RCN has provided a bibliometric analysis of all publications by listed researchers for each panel.
- The organisations were also invited to put individual research groups forward for evaluation within each area. The field panels evaluated them individually and also used these research group evaluations to support their area evaluations.

The universities and institutes have themselves decided which parts of their organisation to submit to the evaluation. The coverage of the evaluation is therefore not complete, but is likely to encompass the most significant research-active entities across the Humanities in Norway. Areas do not necessarily map directly onto organisational structures. For consistency, this evaluation refers to these submitted entities as 'areas'.

Figure 1 Structure of the Evaluation



1.3.2 The data available to the panels

The data available to the panels were

- **Self-assessment reports** provided by the research-performing organisations. (The template for these is reproduced in **Feil! Fant ikke referansebildet**.) There is one for each area. A self-assessment report comprises a report firstly at the level of the organisation (most often at the faculty or research institute level), and, secondly, information about an area. The organisation-level information is repeated across multiple self-assessments. So, for example, UiO's self-assessment for the Aesthetics field will comprise an initial section about the University of Oslo as a whole and a second part about the work of UiO in aesthetic disciplines.
- A **bibliometric report** from NIFU (Aksnes & Gunnes, 2016) that provides field indicators at the national, organisational and area level
- **Funding data** from the RCN
- Examples of **scholarly outputs** from areas and groups submitted by the research-performing organisations

- **Societal impact statements** from individual areas. These have been inspired by the use of impact statements in the UK Research Excellence Framework. They are free-text accounts from the researchers of societal impacts they believe research in their area has had over a period of up to fifteen years
- **Survey data from NOKUT** about student views on teaching

Building from the bottom

- The assessments of individual scholarly outputs fed into the group and area evaluations
- The group evaluations fed into the area evaluations
- The report on personnel and publications (bibliometrics) was considered at the area level
- Impact statements were considered at the area level
- The area evaluations were used by the field panels to build a picture of national performance within the field covered by the panel reports
- The field evaluations are used by the main panel to construct the national HUMEVAL evaluation

Panelists met representatives of the areas evaluated in a series of one to two-hour interviews, in which they were able to check their understanding of the data submitted for evaluation.

1.3.3 Criteria used during the evaluations

The panels based their work on a consistent set of criteria, against which they reported their findings at the area level. These were

- Organisation, leadership and strategy
- Availability and use of resources
- Research production and quality
- Recruitment and training
- Networking with other researchers, nationally and internationally
- Impact on teaching
- Societal impact
- Overall assessment and feedback

Research group reports consider

- Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources
- Research production and quality
- Recruitment and training
- Networking with other researchers, nationally and internationally
- Impact on teaching
- Overall assessment and feedback

Impact was judged in terms of the reach and significance of the impact reported.

- **Reach:** The extent and/or diversity of the organisations, communities and/or individuals who have benefited from the impact.
- **Significance:** The degree to which the impact enriched, influenced, informed or changed the policies, practices, understanding or awareness of organisations, communities or individuals.

In each case, the panels wrote full-text evaluations, which are reported in a separate volume for each panel. They also awarded scores using a series of 5-point Likert scales. These were used internally in

order to gain an overview of the many parts of the evaluation. Only the grades for research groups' overall performance and research quality have been published (in accordance with the Terms of Reference).

1.3.4 Limitations

An exercise such as this inevitably suffers from limitations. This section briefly describes the main limitations of which the panels are aware.

Humanities in Norway does not have a strongly developed evaluation culture. There have been a number of field evaluations with a narrower scope than the present one in recent years, but Norwegian Humanities researchers are not often subject to evaluation unless they are working in an externally-funded centre of excellence. Humanities are also generally less exposed to the need for external, competitive funding from sources such as the RCN, reducing the extent to which scholars need to subject themselves to external assessment, compared with scholars in many other fields. As a result, at least parts of the community have limited experience of how to deal with an evaluation and how to communicate with the evaluators in ways that will enable positive judgements. This is particularly the case in relation to the use of impact statements, which is a novel technique everywhere. Clearly, those with a more developed evaluation culture will be better placed than others to receive a positive evaluation.

The panels worked on the basis of a limited set of data and information. The sources used were mainly

- The self-assessments of the institutions and research groups
- The (small number of) publications submitted by the institutions
- The personnel and publication analysis
- A report on the interplay of research and teaching in the Humanities
- A report on research organisation and external engagement in the Humanities
- Interviews with representatives of the institutions, and national data on publication performance and student satisfaction

The panels could not check the information provided by the institutions against information found elsewhere. Further, institutions and groups did not always specify what they saw as their contributions to knowledge in various fields, so that the panels have had to make their own decisions about the disciplines and areas to which individual research activities are relevant.

The request for self-evaluation data was not uniformly understood by the institutions, suggesting that, in future, equivalent requests could be made more explicit. The number of sample publications requested was low and the processes used to select them are not clear to the panels. Whatever process the universities used, it involves a positive bias. This is a normal feature of such evaluations and the panels regard it as unproblematic: injecting a positive bias means that it is known what sort of bias there is. However, the representativity of the publications submitted is unclear. The fact that some groups submitted publications that were not peer-reviewed was a further complication.

Universities followed different strategies in responding to the request. For example, the number of research groups submitted varied considerably. Some of the groups appeared to have been constructed artificially for the purpose of the evaluation. Others appeared to be groups of people who normally worked together. This variability makes comparisons difficult. The focus on groups also complicates the identification of individual, outstanding talent. It also does not always reflect

the way in which Humanities researchers work, since individual scholarship as opposed to group work is more normal than in the social and 'hard' sciences. There is significant variation among disciplines and panels in their perception of the appropriateness of using research groups as units of assessment. So the divide is as much within the Humanities as between the Humanities and the hard sciences. However, it should also be noted that most of the universities have policies in place to support research groups.

Both NOKUT and NIFU provided data to support the evaluation, based on existing statistical and disciplinary categories. As a result, they do not always match the scope of the areas or groups evaluated by the panels, so that, while they provided useful, broad indications, the panels had to treat them with some caution. NIFU's bibliometric analyses were very helpful. However, the particular weaknesses of bibliometric approaches to the Humanities, a field in which a great deal is published outside the channels normally used for bibliometric analysis, mean that bibliometric indicators present a picture that is even more partial in the Humanities than in other fields.

Participation in the RCN's field evaluations is optional and there are no incentives (such as an effect on funding) for participation, so that their coverage is inevitably partial. The panels are aware that some significant groups are missing from this evaluation, so that the evaluation does not cover the entire field.

It is important to note that the traditional universities in Norway, on the one hand, and the new universities and the university colleges, on the other, have different amounts of institutional research funding. In principle, in the old universities, academics have sufficient funds to split their time equally between teaching and research. At the newer universities and university colleges, the institutional funding covers a much smaller percentage of research time, typically of the order of 20%, though there is wide variation among individual institutions. Only the Norwegian Academy of Music is under 10% (7%), whereas the others are typically between 15 and 30%. Some – but not all – of these institutions actively manage research time, allocating more to some and less to others. These very different funding conditions mean that expectations of research productivity per person should not be the same for the old and the new institutions.

Disciplines and fields differ in terms of what they regard as knowledge or quality and the extent to which they make 'progress', so that knowledge is cumulative rather than comprising many parallel forms of knowledge. A uniform understanding of these dimensions across the whole of the Humanities would therefore not be appropriate; they must be judged within their own disciplinary contexts. The panel approach of using peers in relevant fields to make judgements addresses this issue. While this inconsistency might be regarded as a weakness, the panels regard it as a strength, because discipline-relevant criteria are used in each case in order to compare performance with an international benchmark.

These limitations mean that this evaluation is to some degree an exercise in hermeneutics and collegial advice, rather than in exact measurements and objective results. The panels based their work on an attitude of solidarity with the colleagues and institutions under review. In cases of doubt about information, a charitable interpretation of the data was chosen. The panel also tried to formulate critical feedback in as constructive a way as possible.

1.4 Those evaluated

The evaluation covered Humanities research at 36 research-performing organisations. Ten of these institutions participated in the panel for Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies

Table 2 Research-performing organisations participating in panel 4 – Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies

	University faculties	No of Researchers	No of Research Groups
Norwegian University of Science and Technology	NTNU Faculty of Humanities	37	2
University of Bergen	UiB Faculty of Humanities	75	4
University of Oslo	UiO Faculty of Humanities	174	4
University of Stavanger	UiS Faculty of Arts and Education	7	
The Arctic University of Norway (UiT)	UiT Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education	38	2
University of Agder	University of Agder	14	1
	Other HE-institutions		
	Hedmark University College	11	1
	Norwegian School of Economics	16	
	Østfold University College	24	2
	Research institutes		
	Peace Research Institute Oslo	7	1

2 Assessment at the national level

2.1 Introduction

The research domain assessed by this panel is very broad and diverse. The panel received submissions from ten institutions but had the impression that the assessment tool did not always allow all the disciplines involved to come forward with their distinct research. It was not always clear how research groups were identified by institutions. The documentation, as well as the interviews with representatives of the institutions in Oslo, made clear that the concept of research groups was not seen as advantageous for all of the disciplines involved. The groups were quite often rather small and at the same time rather diverse internally.

2.2 The areas

Norway has two main locations for Asian and African Studies, PRIO and the University of Oslo. Together, they cover Asia, East Europe, the Middle East, South Africa and America. The area is well-organised. Whereas PRIO can in this respect focus exclusively on research, Asian and African Studies at the University of Oslo has the same tension between the demands of teaching and research as in other languages, but seems to cope very well.

Classics (Greek and Latin) are mainly found at three Norwegian universities: Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim. The latter two, Bergen, and Trondheim, are quite small, whereas Oslo is larger than the two taken together. There seems to be a sensible division of labour between the three universities, giving priority to different research areas.

English as a subject appears to sit uneasily within a number of universities. It is often part of large interdisciplinary groupings, which means that English as an area can be difficult to identify. English spans research in both language and literature, and this can lead to a further dissipation of researchers into groupings that are more exclusively focused on literature in general or on linguistics, respectively. Given this situation, the panel found it difficult not to conclude that English in Norway is generally not clearly or well organised, with the national strategy in the area of English being diffuse at best. It can also mean that tensions arise between the sub-parts of the area if they are part of organisational structures that treat them separately. In such contexts, developing a coherent strategy for English can be problematic. There is nevertheless good evidence that, at the grassroots level, significant academic leadership is being shown within individual research groups, especially in relation to the corpus-based study of the language and some literature groups.

Romance languages as well as **German**, are always in a department with other languages, rather than in separate departments.

In Norway, there are only three locations for **Slavonic** (Oslo) or **Russian** Studies (Bergen, Tromsø). This distribution seems to be justified. Bergen and Tromsø focus on contemporary Russian culture, whereas the focus in Oslo is on cultural history and its effects on the state. All these research interests are perfectly valid and pertinent.

2.3 Strengths and weaknesses of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies in an international context

This panel covers a linguistically and culturally large and diverse domain of expertise. Some institutions have developed clear and well-functioning strategies for research in these areas, mainly by prioritising some of them by making clear choices and linking them with financial incentives. In most cases, these choices also imply a thematic focus on research with societal impact, instead of on a broad range of topics connected to a (language) culture. Asian and African studies as well as Slavonic studies are successful in this respect. This strategy also ties in with the development of national and international funding instruments. Ultimately, this leads to larger interdisciplinary groups with easier access to research money.

The research in all the areas covered by this panel is connected to teaching and teaching programmes. The most evident connections are – naturally – at the MA and PhD level. Knowledge that feeds into teaching is a genuine and important societal impact of Humanities research.

Generally speaking, the strongest research in the modern language areas is done in linguistics rather than in literature. Research in linguistics is also often published in English, and it is less culture-dependent than literature.

When an area is present at several institutions, there mostly seems to be a clear division of labour.

The recruitment of staff, especially to PhD positions, has a clear international dimension and is therefore competitive.

Of the six areas that were assessed by this panel, English is the largest in terms of publications: it produced 32% of the publications within the panel, and 34% of the publication points. Classical Studies produced the smallest amount of publications: 6%, but 8% of the publication points – this is inversely proportional to German studies: 8% of the publications, 6% of the publication points.

In general, the quantity and quality of the research is very good to excellent, although there are exceptions.

The strengths of some of the areas assessed by this panel are offset by the weaknesses of some of the others. In areas in which staff are mainly recruited for teaching positions, research becomes fragmented. This is mainly the case in the cultural disciplines of the modern languages.

For Modern Languages and Literatures (including English) the orientation of research tends not to be in line with teaching programmes (English language and literature; French/German language and literature).

Staff in Modern Languages and Literatures are more often recruited in response to teaching needs rather than primarily for research purposes. If teaching programmes are small (sometimes extremely small), there are not enough staff members to build a research programme. Individual staff members then do individual research, work with international groups, or conduct research in multi-cultural groups, publishing in journals or volumes in the target language (not English). In the latter case, it will be hard to find common ground as a local/national research group, as those individuals will try to find connections with international research groups.

For Area Studies and Classical Languages and Literature, this problem exists to a lesser extent, since teaching programmes in these fields are traditionally multi- or interdisciplinary, and research groups can be more closely aligned with the teaching mission.

Although there is a potential for research to have an impact on teaching, not all the institutions have a strategy in place for all areas to make this connection work.

2.4 Research cooperation (nationally and internationally)

In the strong fields, there is significant evidence of productive networking at the national and international level. Areas that are not well-organised or cannot profit from organisational structures participate less in national and international collaboration. In the smaller areas, however, individual mobility is still often very common.

As stated above, some institutions in smaller but well-functioning areas have come to a sensible division of labour/research focus.

The proportion of publications with external national and international co-authors in the areas covered by this panel is very much in line with the proportion for the Humanities as a whole in Norway: 19% (22% for the Humanities as a whole). However, English (13%) and German (14%) do less well, whereas Slavonic Studies performs above average, with 31%. Slavonic also has the highest percentage of Level 2 (38%) and Level 2+ (24%) publications. Romance studies has the lowest rates here: 17% and 7%, respectively. Book chapters are an important medium in all the areas, especially in German studies (51%), while the figure for Slavonic studies is only 25%.

2.5 Funding and infrastructure

Some areas profit from preferential local institutional funding, resulting from a sustainable research strategy in both a national and international context.

Some areas are not prioritised by their institutions and are not organised along research lines, and staff are hired primarily for their teaching expertise. In such cases, this could ultimately result in the demise of these areas.

Data show that Linguistics is able to obtain more than twice as much funding as Literature from external sources, such as the RCN. However, RCN data are organised by discipline, not area.

2.6 Staff

Staff are more frequently hired for their teaching, rather than research expertise. This makes it difficult to see research strategies in English Language and Literature or in other Modern Language and Literature research. Only in those cases in which the literatures of various target languages find each other in a common research interest is it possible to develop a research strategy – and then the problem is often compatibility with teaching programmes.

2.7 Cooperation with other sectors of society (e.g. the private and public sector) and the societal impact and function of the fields of research in society.

As already indicated above, some disciplines and areas have positioned themselves better than others with regard to societal challenges. Whereas all areas show effort in the dissemination of research, some are capable of real cooperation with other sectors. Research institutes are better

positioned for this than universities, as the latter also have to staff teaching programmes, for example language programmes.

Scholars of literature who are not working in an interdisciplinary environment, and who study literature in languages other than English with few other colleagues, will normally not be able to engage with society at large, and will not receive much funding.

However, the impact even those scholars have through teaching, and educating young people to become informed and critical citizens, should be taken into account when the value of their work is evaluated.

2.8 Comments

From the documentation that was evaluated by this panel, it was evident that areas, as they are defined for this evaluation, do not match the actual structure of the research in the institutions. The areas for this panel have mainly been defined according to teaching programmes at the BA level. This is problematic, as it prevents us from gaining good insight into the research situation in some areas. This observation does not just apply to Norway, however, it applies internationally.

2.9 Overall recommendations

With respect to the areas covered by this panel, we have the following recommendations:

Firstly, we see that, throughout the country, good research is stimulated through comparable measures and in the same areas. This strengthens the areas that are organised by research topics (with strong ties to societal challenges), and makes them bigger, better performing and better funded. One obvious recommendation would therefore be to further strengthen these areas, locally, nationally and, since this is an international trend, internationally.

However, the panel was concerned that some areas in Modern Languages and Literatures (Slavonic, Germanic, and, to a lesser degree, English) will ultimately expire, locally, nationally and, since this is an international trend, internationally. Our panel recommends that the Norwegian government consider the value of both strengthening already strong areas and urgently putting more effort and money into the others. However, this would not just mean strengthening research, but also restructuring teaching programmes, in order to build a structure that generates more possibilities for a research impact in teaching – and that attracts more students to these programmes.

Thirdly, it is evident that some institutions primarily have a regional educational function. Even if teaching were to profit from research, does that necessarily mean that the staff working at those institutions have to carry out research? It might be more efficient and lead to better results if those institutions received funding to develop programmes and strategies to connect research and teaching, but without having to do the research themselves.

3 Assessment of institutions and research areas

3.1 Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Humanities (NTNUHF)

At the time of the evaluation, the Faculty of Humanities at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNUHF) was undergoing a merger that, by 2017, will make it one of eight faculties at NTNU, containing six departments of varying size. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of NTNUHF decreased from NOK 176 million (2013) to NOK 163 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure increased, however, from 32% to 34% in the same period. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by private Norwegian sources. Moreover, funding from the EU constitutes a relatively sizeable share of the total external funding (NOK 7 million in 2013 and NOK 8 million in 2015).

Within the area of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies, 37 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: two research groups (ACT Antiquity & the Classical Tradition, and Enlightenment News), three impact case studies and one research area publication. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

3.1.1 Research Area: Classical Studies

Organisation, leadership and strategy

As a discipline, Classical Studies appears to be loosely structured, but researchers work together on common subjects (e.g. Ovid, translation in Antiquity). The area contributes to the strategic goals of the institution in several respects, for example international recruitment and collaboration, and collaboration with non-academic partners.

Resources

The area is small but makes good use of its resources. External funding from the RCN has been obtained for the project 'The Heterosexual Tradition of Homoerotic Poetics', which runs for four years.

Research production and quality

This is a very productive area with a scholarly output of high quality and international impact, covering a wide range of disciplines and sub-areas. Between 2011 and 2015, the 37 researchers at NTNU reached 126 publication points – 35% of them had at least four publication points and 38% were without publication points; 40% of publications were at Level 2, 74% in English and 45% were journal articles (for the Humanities as a whole, the respective figures were 23% at Level 2, 57% in English and 53% in journals; NIFU Report 2016).

Recruitment and training

Two PhD candidates are connected to the RCN project 'The Heterosexual Tradition of Homoerotic Poetics'. There has been a PhD position selection for the NTNU's Outstanding Academic Fellows programme. There is a strong element of international collaboration with respect to the recruitment and training of PhD students. There are no postdocs as yet.

Networking

The individual members are engaged in a variety of collaborative projects, both in Norway and abroad. They also collaborate with non-academic partners on activities such as translating classical texts.

Impact on teaching

Tenured staff teach at all university levels and also collaborate with universities abroad.

Other societal impact

The area displays considerable innovative initiative, first and foremost through the ambitious Kanon project that aims to present Norwegian readers with classical literature in new translations and that has attracted much media attention.

Overall assessment

The strengths of this area should be maintained: the general impression is of a very dynamic and active area that combines international impact with popular outreach in Norway. It sees itself as the flagship for Classics research in Norway. A wide range of subjects is now covered by a small group. It might be more sustainable to strengthen the group with more scholars.

3.1.2 Research area: English

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The self-assessment makes a convincing case for effective leadership, identifying a need for leaders at all levels who can manage communication and strategy. Situated in a University of Science and Technology, the faculty's prevailing vision is to be a humanistic force and to engage in interdisciplinary research, but to be anchored in strong academic disciplines. It is strategic in its development of research groups and projects, and uses peer reviewing. It is good to see emphasis being placed on artistic achievement (translations of songs etc.). It sees Humanities as having a key role, since technological and business innovation, it argues, are always tied up with culture and society. The importance of a strategic document for the faculty is acknowledged, as is the necessity of it being revised if it is to be up to date.

Though groups are the priority for research funding, the need to support promising new initiatives is recognised, and seed funding can be offered. In Humanities, the lone scholar still plays an important part, and the different forms of research and the lone scholar's role are recognised. There is a good record of research funding driving the activity of research groups. The research group Enlightenment News is key because of its international reach, its focus on the topical issue of 'big data', and its support of post-doctoral and doctoral projects. There is support in place for writing research funding applications and particular emphasis is placed on international collaboration. The faculty has maintained its level of EU and external private sources (with some variation), while its funding from external Norwegian sources has increased. Strategy has a prominent place in the largely convincing self-assessment, particularly as it is followed through with the formulation of more detailed plans.

Resources

There is access to the Gunnerus Library and the special collections there, where several important archival collections have their home. These collections have been able to underpin PhD research. There has been impressive expenditure on infrastructure in terms of buildings and facilities, and this has been tied to the need to underpin world-class research. Some level of detail is provided, but more could be made of library resources for research and collaborations with other research collections.

Research production and quality

Compared with Classical Studies in the faculty, English is publishing at a lower level. Productivity is reasonable, and the research group Enlightenment News, which is relatively new and whose strategy does not quite match up to its publications as yet, is remarkable for the degree of networking it has undertaken. There is a significant potential for interdisciplinary work here, with the emphasis on digital humanities. There is some very good work being undertaken both inside and outside the group.

Recruitment and training

The institution has a strongly strategic approach to recruitment and training, with postdoctoral and doctoral positions judged on the basis of research priorities. NTNU has put concrete measures in place to enable it to move towards a better gender balance, including mentoring. Similarly, there are specific plans in place to aid mobility and international study. PhD students are mentored about career opportunities, including international careers. The institution is aware of the value of internationalisation, especially for PhD students and postdocs. Research leave is increasingly tied to international study and collaboration.

Networking

This is a very strong aspect of the Enlightenment News research group. There is strong encouragement to take part in international networks and to engage in collaborative projects.

Impact on teaching

The institution boasts a 'research-led curriculum'. Research groups are coordinated with BA and MA degrees, and there are opportunities, particularly at MA level, for students to develop projects relevant to research groups, and to attend conferences. Also at the BA level, students can write a research-oriented thesis. These claims are not quite borne out by the survey of students taking the BA in Foreign Languages, where satisfaction with participation in research is lower than satisfaction with research employed in teaching, and both are no more than average.

Other societal impact

The assessment is based on an exhibition by the Enlightenment News group, which received good media attention and was open to the public. The web page and daily tweet are excellent. This is a well-presented case study.

Overall assessment

This is a faculty that is clearly thinking strategically and that has good, clear plans. The Enlightenment News group has yet to achieve its potential in terms of publication, but the building blocks are in place in terms of networking and strategic thinking.

Feedback

The panel felt that the documentation was well-presented and that there is evidence of clear strategic thinking. In order to fully exploit the potential of digital humanities, new expertise may need to be brought in, or strategic partnerships entered into.

3.1.3 Research Area: Romance languages

Organisation, leadership and strategy

Romance in this institution only means French. The area has an inferior position in the new structure, with no leader at the area level. There are good incentives from the faculty and good local funding possibilities. They do not seem to be being exploited, however.

Resources

Good resources are provided, but this does not appear to result in good research quality.

Research production and quality

There is little productivity and no significant contribution to advancing the state of the art.

Recruitment and training

There are sound hiring and career development practices. This is a good environment for PhD students and postdocs. There are good possibilities for mobility and there is an excellent gender balance.

Networking

The panel received no evidence of networking.

Impact on teaching

The institution provides good incentives, but it is less clear whether they are followed up. Students' satisfaction with knowledge of scientific work methods and research and with own experience of research and development work is around the average for this area.

Other societal impact

No impact cases were submitted for this area.

Overall assessment

The area is rather weak overall but it is a good environment for junior researchers.

Feedback

The good incentives offered by the faculty and the excellent funding possibilities should be better exploited in order to produce better quality research and advance the state of the art.

3.2 University of Bergen, Faculty of Humanities (UiBHF)

Established in 1948, the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Bergen (UiBHF) has five departments and two inter-faculty centres. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of the Faculty of Humanities increased from NOK 206.1 million (2013) to NOK 234 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure also increased from 21.7% to 22.9% in the same period. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by private Norwegian sources. Some modest EU funding is also documented throughout the period (NOK 4.8 million per year on average).

Within the area of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies, 75 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: four research groups (Borders of Europe, Conditions, LINGCLIM and Literature), four impact case studies and three research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

The bibliometric data show that, between 2011 and 2015, the 75 researchers listed from UiBHF reached 328 publication points – 40% of them had at least four publication points. Only 27% were without publication points, while 24% of publications were at Level 2, 59% in English and 54% were journal articles (for the Humanities as a whole, the respective figures were 23% at Level 2, 57% in English and 53% in journals; NIFU Report 2016). The numbers for UiBHF are thus around the average for the Humanities as a whole.

3.2.1 Research Area: Classical Studies

Organisation, leadership and strategy

Classical Studies in Bergen is a small area. The staff seem to collaborate on teaching rather than research. As regards research, in line with the department's overall structure, they are organised in cross-disciplinary research groups. These groups appear to form stimulating milieus for both informal knowledge exchange and for research collaboration. Medieval studies has even been selected as a future multidisciplinary area of excellence.

Resources

Resources in terms of the distribution of working hours between research and teaching, and in terms of sabbaticals, appear to be satisfactory. There is little evidence of external funding in recent years.

Research production and quality

Three subject areas are singled out in the self-assessment: Textual criticism with the focus on Greek poetry and drama, Classical reception studies with the focus on Scandinavian and German literature of the Romantic age, and Medieval studies with the focus on book history and the interaction between Latin and vernacular literature. The first and the third areas are particularly well reflected in the production registered in CRISTin. Some staff members produce extensively, others less so (according to registrations in CRISTin). Some publish internationally, others mostly in Norwegian (again according to CRISTin).

The more popular production in Norwegian, for example translations of classical texts, also appears to be of high quality.

Recruitment and training

The institutional report states that further recruitment in Latin and Greek must 'depend on the group's motivation and ability to ensure externally financed projects'. This can only be strongly encouraged: at present there is only one postdoc and no PhD students. Gender distribution is very unequal. The four permanent staff members and the postdoc are all male. The holder of a tenure track position that is to be made a permanent position is female.

Networking

The cross-disciplinary research groups stimulate networking in themselves. In the fields where research productivity is high, networking also extends beyond the institution.

Impact on teaching

Given the staff's research interests, there is surely potential for stimulating interplay between research and teaching. However, at least as regards Latin, the strong Medieval profile – which will be cultivated even more in future according to the institutional self-assessment – is not reflected at the BA and MA levels.

Other societal impact

Societal issues are probably addressed from the point of view of the research groups rather than of the area – the material available does not allow for assessment.

Overall assessment

The number of people is small considering the vast amount of subjects it covers. Medieval studies, including Medieval Latin literature and book history, is a particularly strong field in Bergen, profiting from a strong cross-disciplinary milieu and existing research traditions. Classical Greek is also a relatively well-covered field.

Feedback

Classical Latin would benefit from stronger recruitment at PhD and postdoc level. As regards Latin from all periods, introducing students to the medieval and early modern collections of the University Library, and presenting them with well-defined research tasks, may have a recruitment potential.

3.2.2 Research Area: Germanic Studies

Organisation, leadership and strategy

Although strategic planning should be done at the departmental level (also with respect to budget allocation and study programmes), no clear strategy or leadership is apparent in this area.

The faculty aligns itself with the research focus of the university: global social challenges, marine research and climate and energy adaptation. It sees good opportunities for medical humanities. However, it leaves the departments to decide how to engage with these themes.

Research is organised in cross-disciplinary research groups that do not follow the organisation of teaching programmes.

Resources

The Faculty of Humanities is facing budget cuts, resulting in broader teaching programmes and fewer staff members in the area of Germanic Studies. Since the teaching programmes do not reflect the organisation of the research, research expertise in this area is becoming scattered and less visible.

Resources in terms of the distribution of working hours between research and teaching and in terms of sabbaticals appear to be satisfactory. Staff can apply for a sabbatical based on a good research plan. There is scarce evidence of external funding in recent years and interdisciplinary thematic groups make researchers in Germanic Studies virtually invisible.

Research production and quality

Little is said in the documentation that was presented to the panel about the quality and production in the Germanic Studies area.

Recruitment and training

During the last five years, the Department of Foreign Languages has lost six positions, with far-reaching consequences for the study programmes in French and German. There seems to be no clear strategy for recruitment (other than deciding whether or not a retiring employee will be replaced).

The institution shows awareness of the need for a balance between research and language expertise, and between research and teaching.

All vacancies are advertised internationally. There is an increase in international applications, and the majority of those appointed have PhDs.

The university's strategic plan for the period 2012–15 clearly indicates a concern with gender balance and diversity. However, in spite of these efforts, the higher the research position, the smaller the proportion of female staff.

Networking

The cross-disciplinary research groups stimulate networking in themselves. The quality of the networking in this field cannot be assessed on the basis of the documents provided.

Impact on teaching

The self-assessment document makes it clear that the BA and MA language programmes are designed around at least two disciplines: linguistics and literature/culture. Research groups are put together thematically, however. Nevertheless, there are indications that teaching profits from the research of the staff. Students also do their own research, sometimes in the context of staff's research.

Other societal impact

The documents presented on societal impact do not provide evidence that Germanic Studies has an impact.

Overall assessment

The area suffers from fragmentation due to the division between teaching and research in the department. Individual researchers could succeed in both contexts, but the panel found it difficult to assess their contributions to the area.

Feedback

The university may wish to consider how areas like Germanic Studies, which are split between departments, may be adversely affected by decision-making processes that are driven at departmental level.

3.2.3 Research Area: English

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The university has a highly devolved system of departmentally led strategic planning. In spite of this, no strong leadership is notable in the area.

Resources

English has lost several positions in the last few years. Coupled with modest grant income across Panel 4 for the university, this must limit the university's capacity to invest in areas of strength and to build critical mass, as the university's SWOT analysis acknowledges. The research income performance of the university is fair in the Humanities.

Research production and quality

Both the Literature and Language researchers at the University produce work of high quality, with strengths in Medieval and Renaissance literature, corpus research and studies of varieties of English. Staff have a high proportion of research time, which is clear from the publications submitted. The research output evidence submitted is overwhelmingly from the Language discipline rather than from Literature, however. Overall, the publications analysis provided by NIFU confirms that Bergen is strong in English studies, though the evidence provided suggests that this strength is drawn from Language rather than Literature.

Recruitment and training

The university has a clear strategy in this area, particularly with regard to seeking gender balance. The university is honest about issues it may have in this area and seems committed to addressing them. There is a sense of prevailing gloom in the self-assessment, however, as regards a possible future decline in student numbers and the impact this will have on staffing. While the SWOT analysis talks of untapped potential as a solution to this, the details of how such potential can be tapped is lacking. This gives an overall impression of a drift towards a clear recruitment problem without a clear solution. Training seems adequate.

Networking

The university has good systems for networking for both staff and PhD students. This is supported by enhanced administrative support at the faculty level. There is some evidence of networking activity for both Language and Literature, but it seems to be somewhat personal rather than systematic.

Impact on teaching

The research in the area seems to feed well into teaching provision. The Bergen Shakespeare and Drama Network may have such impact, but we are provided with insufficient evidence to assess that. The evidence from student feedback is a cause for concern, however. The BA in English programme at Bergen has the lowest level of 'satisfaction with knowledge of scientific work methods and research' of all of the degrees for which data is provided for Panel 4. The students have even lower satisfaction with their 'own experience with research and development work'. While this is, admittedly, only based on the responses from 14 students, the disquiet of the students should not be overlooked. It is not suggestive of a strong throughput from high-quality research to teaching.

Other societal impact

The impact of English at the university is unclear – one case study, for example, does not really seem to belong to English, although it perhaps has its roots in literary research. The net result seems to be

a quite modest oral history project. This is a pity as, from the institutional self-assessment for the area, we might have expected a clearer impact story for Literature to match the strength of that for Language. As it stands, we have somewhat broad and vague claims about what potentially looks like impact, for example the Bergen Shakespeare and Drama Network, but there is insufficient evidence to assess it.

Overall assessment

English at Bergen looks to be stronger in Language than in Literature. There is some evidence of a lack of organisation and clear forward planning in the area. This is perhaps exacerbated by the current departmental structure and planning system. Overall, however, English at Bergen is performing well in terms of research output.

Feedback

The university may wish to consider how areas like English, which are split between departments, may be adversely affected by a decision-making process that is driven at the departmental level. The university is clearly aware of such issues, but it should note that this is having a negative impact on English.

3.2.4 Research Area: Romance language

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The local area is good, but it is not clear what its influence is. The area is well-supported by the institution. There are no formulated goals and the area as such is not central to the institution's overall goals. There is no evidence of a clear publication strategy.

Resources

Resources and infrastructure are adequate, but they do not seem to be fully exploited. There is a good balance between teaching and research.

Research production and quality

Romance (in particular French) studies in this Department are becoming more interdisciplinary, although using methodology developed in a Romance context. Most of the research in the area is individually based. However, the panel found the quality of the research unimpressive. Productivity is generally good, with some striking exceptions.

Recruitment and training

Recruitment and career development practices are good. The environment for PhD students and postdocs is very good, and there is excellent international mobility. There is also a decent gender balance.

Networking

Interdisciplinary networking is excellent, but the area-specific network has not been a focus. The area benefits, however, from the interdisciplinary research some of the researchers are involved in.

Impact on teaching

The more traditional research (in linguistics, literature, society) has a clear impact on teaching, but the important interdisciplinary work has very little impact. The institution is aware of the problem, however.

Other societal impact

Although the 'Reviving Boruca language case' has no social impact in Norway, it seems to be important in Costa Rica. The YOUNGCLIM case focuses on young people's understanding of language in climate change issues. It has been well disseminated. It is less clear whether it has had any important social impact. The other two submitted impact cases are not relevant to the area.

Overall assessment

The area is doing all right, but no more at this university, although it has given birth to the star group LINGCLIM.

Feedback

The research within the area is mainly part of interdisciplinary work. This is fine, but the more traditional research in Literature and Language in the area should be encouraged and supported more by the institution. The university should also consider how to capitalise on the success of LINGCLIM

3.2.5 Research Area: Slavonic studies

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The area has some internationally prominent scholars, especially in the field of post-Soviet language culture. There is a Principal Investigator for two very important RCN projects on contemporary Russian culture (Landslide of the Norm, Future of Russian). Both projects involved many prominent scholars from abroad.

Resources

UiB only has Russian studies, which is probably justified given the good size of the Slavonic Department in Oslo. The resources seem to be sufficient, although it would be desirable to have more opportunities to recruit PhD candidates.

Research production and quality

Russian Studies at UiB have produced excellent research. The results have been published in English-language monographs.

Recruitment and training

This research area hires promising young scholars and involves them in the research projects.

Networking

The international network is very good, but contacts within Norway could be stronger.

Impact on teaching

Research topics may be well applied in teaching, but not much evidence is presented.

Other societal impact

Two research projects address important issues in contemporary Russian culture and provide a solid basis for journalistic work, although not much evidence is presented.

Overall assessment

This research area is very strong. It has an impressive international reach and chooses important research topics.

Feedback

Excellent research activities and the good focus on contemporary culture should be maintained. Efforts to achieve more media coverage of the research results should be strengthened. The collaboration with Oslo and Tromsø could be intensified.

3.3 University of Oslo, Faculty of Humanities (UiOHF)

The Faculty of Humanities at the University of Oslo (UiOHF) is organised in seven departments, which makes it the largest Faculty of Humanities in Norway. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of the Faculty of Humanities decreased from NOK 434.9 million (2013) to NOK 413.5 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure also decreased from 27% to 24% in the same period. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by other public Norwegian sources. Some modest EU funding is documented in 2013 (NOK 3.3 million) but this category has decreased as well (NOK 1 million in 2015).

Within the area of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies, 174 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: four research groups (China Airborne; Historical Linguistics; Political, Social and Ideological Change in the Middle East, and Travelling Texts, and 16 impact case studies and twelve research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Research Area: Asian and African Studies

Organisation, leadership and strategy

UiOHF reports 60 researchers, representing a significant commitment to Asian and African Studies. The Faculty of Humanities has a specific department (IKOS) that is responsible for teaching and research in Asian and Middle Eastern language-based cultural studies, with sub-sections on South Asia, China, Japan, and the Middle East. Two of the four research groups submitted by UiOHF to Panel 4 come from this department. The research strengths of the department and its sub-sections are comprehensively described in the institutional self-assessment, and two of the additional publications submitted by the institution relate to these research projects, one on South Asia and one on Japan.

IKOS appears to have a clear structure, with regular meetings at various levels to discuss research and set priorities. It has a clear strategy of identifying priority research projects and encouraging them through institutional funding. It also encourages the pursuit of external funding, and the main research groups reported on are very successful in attracting such funding and make excellent use of it. It encourages cooperation between Norwegian institutions and international collaboration, and is very successful at this in the case of Chinese Studies and Middle East Studies, and possibly others as well (the book on Shinto in Japan submitted as an additional publication was co-authored with a researcher from SOAS).

Resources

UiO receives by far the largest proportion of funding of all higher education institutions in Norway. Funding for UiOHF, in particular, appears to have been stable over the past few years, though external funding from several sources (not the RCN) fell noticeably in 2015. In the institutional self-assessment, funding is not broken down to research area level. UiOHF is aware of pressures on funding for infrastructure development, but does not mention any specific resource issues in relation to IKOS or its component research areas. Nevertheless, considerable funding has been made available for the creation of new posts (especially associate professors) and doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships, and several of these have gone to IKOS research projects.

Research production and quality

The two research groups 'Political, Social and Ideological Change in the Middle East' and 'China Airborne' have both been rated 'excellent', and the additional sample publications also appear to be excellent. The publication analyses provided show that publication levels in this area are at least as high as in other areas in the Humanities, although the figures are seldom broken down to the specific area level. Between 2011 and 2015, the 174 researchers listed from UiO reached 723 publication points – 43% of them had at least four publication points. However, 38% were without publication points, while 29% of publications were at Level 2, 69% were in English and 57% were journal articles (for the Humanities as a whole, the respective figures were 23% at level 2, 57% in English and 53% in journals; NIFU Report 2016).

Researchers in Asian and African Studies publish in a wide range of prestigious international journals and book series, and publish to a great extent in English, and also in other relevant languages, such as Chinese. The IKOS Department is notably prolific in terms of publication. Research in the areas where we have information at the research group level, especially Chinese and Middle East studies, are often appropriately interdisciplinary, as is not uncommon in Area Studies.

Recruitment and training

UiOHF appears to have excellent procedures in place for recruitment and career development. The information on this in the institutional self-assessment is not broken down to department level, and one must assume that practices are uniform across the faculty. Close attention is given to training and mentoring doctoral students, and there is a clear line of career development for suitable candidates. Some researchers in this research area have been recruited internationally and vacancies are regularly advertised internationally. Each department has a clear strategic plan for recruitment; once again, current vacancies are stated at the panel level rather than the research area level, but it appears that prioritised projects in Asian and African (particularly Chinese and Middle East) studies are able to recruit using both core and external funding. There is a good gender balance at all levels and a clear awareness of the desirability of maintaining and improving this.

Networking

All of the research mentioned in the institutional self-assessment, and especially that pursued by the submitted research groups, has very strong links with other institutions, both nationally and internationally, which are integral to their academic success. This is typical of research in Area Studies, and this institution is particularly strong in this regard.

Impact on teaching

Where possible, research in IKOS feeds into teaching at BA and MA levels, and there is a concern with developing courses that reflect changing research interests. Master's theses in the Faculty of Humanities are intended to be research projects in their own right, though no specific information is given for IKOS. Remarks in the institutional self-assessment show that the institution is well aware of the possibility that emphasis on research excellence can at times take resources away from teaching. The student survey indicates a slightly lower than average level of student satisfaction with the research component of their learning, but we do not believe the design of this survey warrants too much emphasis based on its interim results.

Other societal impact

'China Airborne': The aim of this project is to have an impact on expert, governmental, public and media discussion of air pollution in China. The group argues that, in its short existence, it has been

invited to present its project to several agencies, in both media and government. The very fact that it has received such invitations and the reports about the group are claimed as evidence of impact. Given the stated aims of the project, this argument can be assessed as plausible. The group routinely records such instances of impact on its website.

‘Islamic Movements’: Research on Islamic Movements has a long history in IKOS. It has been carried out in close cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The group is able to demonstrate that this relationship has been an important component in enabling Norway to play a significant role in engaging with such movements in several Middle Eastern countries. The group can also demonstrate that its research has been widely disseminated in public media. Its claim that this has had an effect on public debate on Islamism in Norway is plausible, but difficult to prove conclusively. This group engages with one of the most important political, social and religious issues of our time and deserves every encouragement to continue.

The same can be said of the associated group in IKOS, which submitted the impact case ‘Militant Islamic Movements’, and which has close relations with the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment. Another IKOS group, which studies Christians in Arab societies, has also reached a wider public and has been accepted by government departments as a useful contributor to public debate. In addition, the Middle East Studies (MES) group in IKOS has submitted a general account of its dissemination activities over the longer term (since the 1990s, and more intensively since 2007), for which it was awarded the UiO dissemination prize in 2012.

‘Korea’: This impact case refers to research on modern ideological debate in Korea. As well as academic publications, which have been widely reviewed, this researcher also participates in public debate in Korea through public lectures (often also available in video format on the internet), regular blogs and newspaper columns, and an extensive series of popular books for a general audience on many aspects of modern thought. The actual effect on the public of this activity would be difficult to gauge, but, for an academic, this is an unusual and impressive involvement in public debate that shows determination to reach out beyond academia.

‘Avoiding offence in embassy art’: This researcher was able to use her research on blasphemy and censorship in India to advise an artist commissioned to install an artistic project in the Norwegian embassy in India without giving offence to Indian visitors. It is a small-scale but interesting example of the potential utility of cultural research.

‘Buddhist Nuns’: This reports on the research-based provision of legal advice within the Theravada tradition of the order of Buddhist nuns in the USA and in Germany, thus contributing to gender equality in this field.

Overall assessment

In general, Asian and African studies in the IKOS Department of UiO appear to be a major strength that should be cherished and further developed. Groups specialising in Middle East studies have over a long period demonstrated that they have the capacity to conduct research at the highest international level. Research on China is also excellent, and the ‘China Airborne’ group, while still in the early stages of development, has the potential to become a star component of the department’s activities. The limited information given on research on Japan, Korea and South Asia also points to work at a high level.

Feedback

Excellent research that deserves every encouragement. A perennial issue in area studies is its relationship to conventional disciplines. IKOS appears to contain researchers from a variety of disciplines in Humanities and Social Sciences, such as History, Anthropology and Political Science. Some more explicit thought might be given at the institutional level to the involvement of area studies researchers in such disciplines. This especially concerns PhDs and postdocs, who have to make decisions as to whether their careers should be oriented more to their area or to their underlying discipline. It also affects the impact that area studies research can have on the disciplines and vice versa.

3.3.1 Research Area: Classical Studies

Organisation, leadership and strategy

As a whole, the area complies well with the overall strategic aims of the faculty. In 2013, Classics at UiO was given the status of prioritised area within the institute (IFIKK). In addition, scholars from Classics participate in two of the faculty's research groups: Travelling Texts, and Syntax and Semantics.

Resources

The area is doing well. As a result of its prioritised status, the area has received extra resources, including an adjunct professorship and two postdocs. Moreover, four projects have received RCN funding within the last 10 years, two from the field of linguistics and two from papyrology (as stated in the institutional self-assessment).

Research production and quality

The academic staff in Classics cover an impressively broad range of subjects. Research production is particularly high in the fields of Linguistics (both Greek and Latin) and papyrology, but other fields of classical philology also appears to be well covered. This also applies to later periods of Greek and Latin literature, though they are not studied extensively. Medieval Latin philology does not seem to be represented – which fits well with its strong position in Bergen.

Recruitment and training

There are currently both PhD students and postdocs among the academic staff. Several of them have been recruited from abroad. Also members of the permanent staff have been recruited from outside Norway.

Networking

The level of international collaboration is particularly high within Linguistics and Greek/papyrology. Digital resources have also been created in these fields, and they contribute to creating international contacts.

Impact on teaching

In the field of papyrology, MA students are given an opportunity to write a thesis related to the Oslo papyri collection.

Other societal impact

Difficult to assess on the basis of the available material.

Overall assessment

There is a good coverage of the broad area of Classics, a very dynamic research milieu within linguistics and Greek/papyrology, and a generally high quality of research.

Feedback

Classical Latin literature might be given more attention in the recruitment of new PhDs and postdocs.

3.3.2 Research Area: English Language and Literature

Organisation, leadership and strategy

There is a very clear strategy at the university level (see the general assessment above). At area level, there is less evidence that much structured leadership is provided across the area of English studies. There seems to be little integration between Language and Literature, which may be understandable. While strong, the work in the area of English Language does not seem to be very well focused on a strategy.

Resources

The university is well resourced and has a credible resource allocation strategy. English has benefitted both from the consistency of this resource and from periodic strategic funding from the faculty. This funding has been used to good effect to invest in and build excellence, principally in the area of English Language rather than in Literature.

The research time provided for staff seems both adequate and justified in terms of output. The sabbatical system seems to be well-managed and reasonably generous.

The university is the strongest-performing university in Norway in terms of RCN grants in the Humanities. The institutional self-assessment clearly identifies mechanisms both for training staff to write grants and for supporting them in various ways to secure grants. This is creditworthy. It is also clear that the university is correct in thinking that one of its strengths is its success in obtaining grants from the RCN – it is apparent from the evidence provided that English is part of that success story.

Research production and quality

This is well managed at the university level. The main manifestation of strength at Oslo is in the study of the English Language, which is the focus of both the university's submission and its strategic investments. Corpus linguistics, which is clearly strong at Oslo, is a particular focus in that context. Overall, the publications analysis provided by NIFU confirms the pre-eminence in Norway of English at Oslo.

Recruitment and training

The university has good plans for handling recruitment, including for dealing with issues such as gender diversity and recruiting internationally. The faculty's focus on literature and contrastive linguistics in 2009 and 2013 did not seem to greatly benefit English Literature, but it had a clearer benefit for English Language (which also benefits from the investment in ILOS).

Networking

There is clear provision for this in the university's strategy. The researchers in English Language are clearly well-connected, and well-regarded, nationally and internationally.

Impact on teaching

According to the survey of students taking the MA in European languages, including the area English Language and Literature, student satisfaction with knowledge of scientific work methods and research and their own experience with research is close to the average for MA students in Panel 4.

Other societal impact

The university's impact strategy is well-articulated and credible. There are two case studies relevant to English, either linked to or directly concerned with the English language. Both 'Textbooks in English Grammar' and 'Multilingual Corpora' are excellent case studies that clearly show real impact. The case study on 'Textbooks in English Grammar' shows a very direct series of impacts on the teaching of English grammar in Norway. This is a well-evidenced and highly credible impact case study in which high quality scholarship directly impacts on teaching

Overall assessment

English at Oslo clearly draws its strength from studies of the English Language. That strength is substantial and runs across a range of topics, although the unifying theme throughout is a corpus-based approach to the study of language in general, and English in particular. This is a distinctive strength for Oslo that they have invested in, although the direct links to investments in corpus work are not clear in the self-assessment submitted to the panel, where they appear to be indirect.

Feedback

While there is probably some splitting of work on English Linguistics between Panel 2 (Nordic Languages and Linguistics) and Panel 4 (Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies), this work at Oslo is strong and distinctive, and the study of the English Language is clearly an area of strength for Oslo, with English Literature not having as distinctive or identifiable a research identity. Within English Language, the university should consider its strengths in corpus building and analysis, which underpin the broad span of its contribution to Panel 4 in general, and the work on English within Panel 4, in particular (and almost certainly work submitted to Panel 2 also).

3.3.3 Research Area: Germanic Studies

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The university has a clear strategy, but for the German Studies area, there is hardly any evidence of strategic leadership. Contrastive linguistics and Area Studies are prioritised. Research in German Studies is divided between linguistics and literature.

Research is organised in cross-disciplinary thematic research groups that do not follow the organisation of teaching programmes.

Resources

Resources seem to be adequate, with a good balance between teaching and research.

Research production and quality

Little is said in the documentation that was presented to the panel about the quality and production in the area of Germanic Studies. However, especially German linguistics is cooperating with other foreign languages. ILOS has a strong tradition for individual research.

Recruitment and training

Conditions are good for early-career researchers and there is a clear and transparent career path. International mobility is also excellent.

There is a clear strategy for gender balance and diversity. However, in spite of the efforts made, the figures for women professors lag a little behind those for other positions.

Networking

Internationalisation and networking are good at the departmental level. However, the quality of the networking in this area cannot be assessed on the basis of the documents provided.

Impact on teaching

The self-assessment document makes it clear that the MA language programmes relevant to German Studies are designed around European Languages. Linguistics students are offered good opportunities to participate in research. Research on literature and culture is organised thematically, however.

Other societal impact

The documents presented on societal impact do not provide evidence that Germanic Studies have an impact.

Overall assessment

As part of the modern languages clusters within the department, the Germanic Studies area seems to suffer from fragmentation. Individual researchers may do well in both contexts, but, given the lack of evidence presented, it is difficult to assess their contributions.

Feedback

The area needs strategic leadership, as it appears to be in danger of fragmentation.

3.3.4 Research Area: Romance language

Organisation, leadership and strategy

Romance languages do not seem to be a focus area for the faculty but are more or less left to their own devices. The area nevertheless contributes to the overall goals of the Faculty. It has a strong tradition for individual research projects. The institution uses internal funds to help develop applications for external funding. There are no financial problems. The publication strategies are clear and there is good evidence of international collaboration.

Resources

Adequate resources are used well. Teaching plays a central role, but there is a good balance with research.

Research production and quality

Research quality and quantity are above average and the area shows good results, in particular in inter-institutional collaborative projects with other foreign languages. They have also published some important monographs.

Recruitment and training

There are excellent conditions for young researchers and there is a clear and transparent career path. International mobility is also excellent. There is a good gender balance and there is also a strategy for developing an appropriate age balance.

Networking

There is evidence of good networking, especially with research projects focused on the electronic databases hosted at the institution.

Impact on teaching

All students are given opportunities to do research corresponding to their level. This is a commendable strategy. It may be a problem that top researchers are often granted research leave and therefore do not have sufficient time with their students.

Other societal impact

A professor of French has written a French grammar manual that is used at most Norwegian universities and that is a reference work in other Scandinavian countries. This is assessed as having a great impact on the teaching of the French language. The construction of big parallel, digitalised corpora has been very important for the revival of contrastive linguistics and thereby for the impact this research has in different domains. The other impact cases have no relevance to the area.

Overall assessment

The strategy of creating research groups can be optimised, but, overall, good use is being made of the relatively good funding.

Feedback

The area seems to be doing well in all aspects at UiOHF. Given its quality, it is worth considering making it a focus area.

3.3.5 Research Area: Slavonic studies

Organisation, leadership and strategy

This is a very strong department with outstanding researchers and a high profile. Slavonic studies is part of the huge Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages. It is not entirely clear whether this centralised structure best meets the needs of the Slavonic department.

Resources

Almost all Slavonic languages are represented (unfortunately research on Bulgarian culture has been discontinued).

Research production and quality

The researchers produce research of very good quality.

Recruitment and training

Recruitment at the PhD and postdoc level is good.

Networking

The researchers in the Slavonic department produce excellent collaborative work (e.g. Red Letter Days) and attract researchers from abroad.

Impact on teaching

Research topics can be well applied to teaching.

Other societal impact

Researchers working on 'Symbolic nation building in post-Soviet states and ex-Yugoslavia' in Slavonic studies give policy briefings to the Norwegian government and the Council of Europe. Research on political groups has been presented at important international conferences.

Overall assessment

The Slavonic department has an impressive record of achievements and it addresses important issues.

Feedback

The area demonstrates excellent research activity, has a good focus on societal aspects of literature and culture, and an innovative interdisciplinary approach. However, this largest department of Slavonic Studies in Norway should consider including research on Ukrainian culture.

3.4 University of Stavanger, Faculty of Arts and Education (UiS)

The Faculty of Arts and Education at the University of Stavanger (UiS) is organised in four departments according to educational profile, and two national centres. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of the Faculty of Arts and Education increased from NOK 265.7 million (2013) to NOK 321.9 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure also increased from 24.8% to 28.2% in the same period. Public Norwegian sources are by far the most important sources of external funding. Some modest EU funding is documented, averaging around NOK 1 million per year.

Within the area of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies, seven researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The institution did not submit any research area publications and no impact case studies. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

3.4.1 Research Area: English

Organisation, leadership and strategy

English is part of a department for secondary teacher education, alongside Religion, History and Languages, and this department is one of four in the faculty. Research groups are also organised across departmental boundaries, however. A dean leads the faculty, but there are also heads of department. The administrative unit for research works across the whole university. Each department/centre has an advisory research board. Since 2008, Research Area Programmes (RAPs) have been established that work across departments and enable international collaboration. They are also allowed some seed money, which must be applied for. These RAPs are mostly focused on teaching and learning, but there is also one called 'Religion, Culture and Globalization'. Educational Sciences are key to the research strategy and it is perhaps not immediately clear what role research in English has within the RAPs.

Research in English Literature is produced by three associate professors who work on narrative, editing and digital publishing, and postcolonial literature; and in Linguistics in a research group working on historical English, especially the Middle English Scribal Texts Programme. There is certainly encouragement to apply for external funding, and there is also funding for mobility and international collaboration. The desire and strategy are there (with limited funding), but this is a very small group of staff.

Resources

The Middle English Scribal Texts Programme has established a text corpus that is available via open access. The Middle English Grammar Corpus (MEG-C) is used by historical linguists worldwide. This is obviously a considerable achievement and a significant resource. There is another archive or database of transcriptions from administrative/legal texts 1399–1525. There is also a Historical Population Register, which is linked with other partners nationally and internationally. It is not clear whether the latter is used as a resource for Linguistics, for History or for both. No library resources are mentioned or possibilities of digital access more generally for staff.

Research production and quality

On the literature side, there is activity in the form of writing articles and chapters, particularly in the field of electronic literature. This has some international significance. There is evidence of good work in historical linguistics and ELT, which raises the overall average. Regarding the bibliometric data, between 2011 and 2015, the seven researchers listed at UiS reached 29 publication points – 86% of them had at least four publication points, while 0% were without publication points; 25% of publications were at Level 2, 93% in English and 50% were journal articles (for the Humanities as a whole, the respective figures were 23% at Level 2, 57% in English and 53% in journals; NIFU Report 2016).

Recruitment and training

Recruitment is driven by the sometimes conflicting needs of recruiting top researchers in their field and having to meet the needs of the field of practice (kindergartens and schools). Academic staff are mostly recruited nationally, though some are international. The institution admits that it needs a more systematic plan to encourage PhD candidates to carry out a research stay abroad during their PhD education using the funding available at the faculty, and to support the mobility of academic staff. The institution is mindful of gender equality at all levels, and participates in a project to enhance career development for women.

Networking

There is evidence of effective networking, particularly in the area of Linguistics, for instance faculty agreements with other universities to make collaboration and mobility easier, international collaboration in all research projects and in all RAPs, and participation in COST-networks.

Impact on teaching

The faculty is naturally linked to teaching through the emphasis on teacher training. Teaching is based on research and students at all levels learn to carry out research. Many theses at BA level have an element of applied research. At MA level, all students write a dissertation, and have an opportunity to present their research and get involved in research groups. Student satisfaction does not altogether bear this out, as the score is quite low for how students perceive their own research engagement.

Other societal impact

Since no impact cases have been submitted, the societal impact of this area cannot be assessed.

Overall assessment

English comprises a small group and the link to teacher education inhibits the development of research in this area to some extent, except for ELT. The subject has done well to establish the international projects it has in the field of Historical Linguistics.

Feedback

With small staff numbers and limited resources, opportunities for external funding and for collaboration and networking need to be energetically pursued, if possible.

3.5 The Arctic University of Norway, Faculty of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (UiTHSL)

The humanistic disciplines at the Arctic University of Norway (UiT) are part of a broad and multidisciplinary faculty, the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (UiTHSL). The faculty, UiT's second largest, is spread across three campuses. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of UiTHSL within the Humanities increased from NOK 136 million (2013) to NOK 140 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure decreased, however, from 18% to 13% in the same period. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by other public Norwegian sources.

Within the area of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies, 38 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: two research groups (CLEAR and Russian Space), two impact case studies and two research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

3.5.1 Research Area: English

Organisation, leadership and strategy

In Humanities, there are six departments, of which Language and Culture is one, and four centres. The faculty and faculty board constitute the highest level of decision-making, but departments and centres also have directors who are in charge of research and teaching within their unit. The aims of the faculty are to both maintain its broad range and strengthen individual disciplines. The panel questioned whether such a non-strategic policy can be maintained. The faculty is also aware of the importance of grand global challenges and the need to accommodate interdisciplinary approaches to them.

English may be involved in these through Linguistics and Digital Humanities, but this is not altogether clear. English Linguistics and general Linguistics have been combined and submitted to Panel 2. A large range of topics in English Literature Studies is cited, but the number of staff involved is not specified and there is no research group in English. The SWOT analysis points to the obvious dangers of fragmentation, and of numerous small groupings of researchers who are not publishing at the highest level and failing to obtain external research funding. This is borne out by the modest level of external funding that has been obtained overall by the faculty. The indications are that some more strategic concentration on research areas is needed, and a greater emphasis on a strategic vision for the future.

Resources

Large resources are claimed for English Linguistics, which has a lab, a lab manager and databases. There is also collaboration on resources with NTNU and UiO. To fully exploit these resources, it is claimed that a larger workforce and materials are needed. This underlines the point made elsewhere that the faculty has a low volume of staff, which is impeding its research progress.

Research production and quality

Research in the area of English covers a wide range of English literature studies.

Between 2011 and 2015, the 38 researchers listed for UiT reached 215 publication points – 32% of them had at least four publication points. Only 29% were without publication points, 31% of

publications were at Level 2, 71% in English and 73% were journal articles (for the Humanities as a whole, the respective figures were 23% at Level 2, 57% in English and 53% in journals; NIFU Report 2016).

The data seem to suggest that there is fairly good publication level in English, but Linguistics seems to have been aggregated and submitted to Panel 2 (Nordic Languages and Linguistics).

Recruitment and training

Recruitment respects the needs of the discipline, but there do not seem to have been any postdocs in English during the period. Attempts are made to balance teaching, research and administration. Senior staff are encouraged to further their research and contribute to the faculty's aims through sabbatical leave. All researchers are encouraged to conduct research abroad and R&D funds can be applied for for this purpose. About 10 staff members per year benefit from this. The institution has met its previous targets in terms of gender equality, but measures are still in place in relation to appointments, and mentoring and extra sabbaticals for female staff.

Networking

There is evidence of networking in the area of Linguistics, particularly in relation to other institutions in Norway.

Impact on teaching

There are opportunities, particularly at the MA Level, to take part in research projects, and MA funds are advertised annually for students to participate in fieldwork, archival studies or conferences. Most PhD students are affiliated to a research group, but research group support for these students is variable, and there is no indication as to where English stands here. The faculty acknowledges that there is a greater need to emphasise the relationship between teaching and research, and disciplines are now required to take up this challenge, for example by running workshops for BA students where a researcher demonstrates his/her research process. There is thus evidence of attempts to link research and teaching and an ongoing concern with this and how to achieve it. The institution is honest about its weaknesses here. MA students in particular have an opportunity to undertake research projects. There is no evidence from student feedback.

Other societal impact

No relevant evidence has been provided for this area by the institution.

Overall assessment

There is little evidence of a thriving research culture in English Literature, and Linguistics has been amalgamated into another panel. The institution admits to suffering from too many small, fragmented research areas, and there is a lack of a fully strategic vision, though there are some reasonable arrangements and resources in place to support staff.

Feedback

It is difficult to say much about the place of English in the institution. The SWOT analysis is honest about weaknesses and problems, and acknowledges the difficulties and dangers of lack of concentration in strategic research areas. This may be a resource issue, but there might be room for more active collaboration with other institutions.

3.5.2 Research Area: Romance language

Organisation, leadership and strategy

In this area, we only find French and Spanish. There is no particularly leading area. No research strategy has been mentioned, and very little or no contribution to the institution's overall goals is visible. Very little external funding is received. At the institutional level, however, there are sound policies and publication strategies.

Resources

The institution provides substantial resources and infrastructure. Spanish seems to make good use of them. The balance between teaching and research is good and very flexible.

Research production and quality

Spanish does well and would be assessed separately as good. Productivity is average. There is little interdisciplinary work. French is almost non-existent.

Recruitment and training

There is a good PhD programme and a relatively transparent career path. National and, in particular international, mobility is well supported by the institution, which seems to produce good results. Women dominate at the lower career levels.

Networking

Very little networking is mentioned in the report.

Impact on teaching

The institution has a clear strategy regarding the interplay between teaching and research, and students are given welcome opportunities to acquire knowledge about and even to practise research.

Other societal impact

No relevant impact cases were submitted.

Overall assessment

While Spanish seems to be well-developed and in a good position, French has no profile nationally and internationally.

Feedback

The institution should focus on the significant difference between research in French and in Spanish and find a way to offer better-focused support for French. The plan for gender equality at UiT does not really seem to work for Romance languages, where women dominate at the lower career levels. The faculty should focus on this problem.

3.5.3 Research Area: Slavonic studies

Organisation, leadership and strategy

This is a rather small research area with a prominent leader who has good international visibility. The researchers choose relevant topics from contemporary culture and make an important contribution.

Resources

Given the limited resources, the research area is quite productive.

Research production and quality

The area produces good publications with international publishers.

Recruitment and training

Recruitment is good at the PhD level, but there are no postdocs.

Networking

The researchers at UiT are well-connected internationally. However, it would be good to have more cooperation within Norway.

Impact on teaching

Research topics can well be applied in teaching.

Other societal impact

The research on 'Punk in Russia' has attracted the interest of the BBC. This is a good example of scholarship that shows societal relevance.

Overall assessment

This is a strong research area that tackles important issues.

Feedback

It would be good to coordinate the research on Russian popular culture with UiB.

3.6 University of Agder, Faculty of Humanities and Education (UiA)

The Faculty of Humanities at the University of Agder (UiA) has four departments under which all study programmes are organised. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total expenditure of UiA decreased from NOK 38.6 million (2013) to NOK 32.9 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure increased, however, from 7.4% to 12.2% in the same period. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by private Norwegian sources. Moreover, a small share of the external funding comes from other public Norwegian sources (NOK 3.5 million during the period 2013-2015).

Within the area of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies, 14 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: one research group (Early Modern and Modern Research) and one impact case study, but no research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

3.6.1 Research Area: English

Organisation, leadership and strategy

At the Faculty of Humanities, English is taught in the Department of Foreign Languages and Translation, one of four departments managed by a dean. All departments contribute to the teacher-training programme. Research is organised at faculty level and is the responsibility of a Director, the Dean and a Faculty Board, who have overall responsibility for decisions about the resourcing of research. Concern is expressed about the low ratio of administrative to academic staff. A new strategic plan is being developed, a process that involves all staff. However the aim seems to be to focus on priority areas, but building on resources and existing research, and taking societal relevance into account. This plan could be trying to meet too many different objectives, which will distract from the strategic aims. Current levels of external funding are low and this is seen as an urgent priority. The fact that Agder is a new university means that its allocation of funding for research is already low nationally, and this is clearly one way that the deficit could be made up.

Resources

There is a focus on the library as a major resource, and awareness of how vital and difficult in terms of funding it is to maintain. New forms of digital access are being pursued. A linguistic research laboratory is under development.

Research production and quality

In the research group, there are some highlights in terms of quality and there is a good level of productivity. Both Linguistics and Literary Studies are key research fields and there are internationally recognised publications in both fields. It clearly makes a contribution to the discipline in the field of sociolinguistics.

As regards bibliometric data, between 2011 and 2015, the 14 researchers at UiA reached 94 publication points – 71% of them had at least four publication points, while 0% were without publication points; 19% of publications were at Level 2, 77% in English and 49% were journal articles (for the Humanities as a whole, the respective figures were 23% at Level 2, 57% in English and 53% in journals; NIFU Report 2016).

There was some concern about the wide focus of the Early Modern and Modern Studies research group, and it would be good to see more coherence, although some good, though disparate, work is being done. There is clearly an interest in how Humanities subjects can interact with the Sciences and that is being explored in some current research on the digital. The Early Modern and Modern Research group is chosen as a key example of interdisciplinary work.

Recruitment and training

The English disciplines largely recruit from outside Norway. The need to recruit good PhD and postdoctoral students is emphasised and the level of recruitment in English seems to be laudable. The main issue seems to be how to support research-active staff with sufficient research time. There are no resources to support regular research leave, although it seems to be a consistent aim to arrive at a situation where Agder is able to provide conditions for staff that are on a par with those at established universities. There are annual appraisals of staff, and there are opportunities to apply for research periods abroad. There is an ongoing gender development plan, which also has an impact on recruitment.

Networking

There is awareness of the importance of networking and this has been effective in English. International collaboration is encouraged, and there is evidence that this is being energetically pursued through conferences, guest lectures and visits. However, as elsewhere, the amount of resources available to facilitate this may not match the ambition.

Impact on teaching

Both BA and MA students have the possibility to do research-based work, often as part of existing research projects. The institution is aware of the difficulties of bringing research and teaching together, and there is an active dialogue about how staff can best present their work to students to make it relevant. Students seem to be aware of the research content of teaching and score their satisfaction as quite good, but slightly less good for the extent to which they can themselves use research.

Other societal impact

There is an excellent case study about tolerance in social and urban space, drawing on work by researchers of the Early Modern and Modern Research group, but also across the institution, and across different countries. This is well presented but perhaps records academic impact rather than societal impact.

Overall assessment

This is an institution that has ambitions to increase the level of its research, which appears to be held back as a result of the sparse resources available to a new university. Some good research is nevertheless being undertaken.

Feedback

There is much to admire about the ambition and the work being undertaken. More strategic thinking about the future could be really helpful, as could some success with external funding, which should be pursued.

3.7 Hedmark University of Applied Sciences (HiHm)

Established in 1994, the Faculty of Education and Natural Sciences (LUNA) at Hedmark University of Applied Sciences (HiHm) is organised in four departments (Dept. of Humanities, Dept. of Social Sciences, Dept. of Fine Arts & Computer Science and Dept. of Natural Sciences & Technology). According to the institutional self-assessment, LUNA's total expenditure increased from NOK 15.5 million (2013) to NOK 19.5 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure also increased from 7.1% to 11.8% in the same period. RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by international public sources.

Within the area of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies, 11 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The institution submitted: one research group (Corpus Linguistics group) and one impact case study, but no research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

3.7.1 Research area: English

Organisation, leadership and strategy

English is based in the Department of Humanities, within the Faculty of Education and Natural Sciences, a disparate and very large grouping. There is a Dean of Faculty

and Vice-Deans of Research and of Education. A Head of Department is also referred to, so there also seems to be some leadership at subject-specific level. English has five professors, two associate professors and one assistant professor. There are also three doctoral students. There are three subfields within the research area of English: corpus linguistics, where the majority of the researchers are clustered, literary studies and English pedagogy (teacher education).

The main aim of the institution is to achieve university status within the Norwegian academic context, and it is currently exploring a merger with Lillehammer University College both to create a 'more robust' institution and to address the future needs of the local and regional communities. This is the second major goal of the institution, which sees itself as having an important regional role, with a mission to address regional and national needs in the areas of further and continuing education in particular. English is seen as an important player in this context. Its small size is an issue, however, and it is not clear whether the proposed merger will increase the number of staff/researchers. In terms of external research funding, though RCN funding has increased dramatically over the last two years, it has decreased in terms of other external sources.

Resources

The self-assessment focuses on the library as the major resource, and its collaborative practices with other libraries. Corpora for research in the Corpus Linguistics Group are under development.

Research production and quality

Between 2011 and 2015, the 11 researchers at HiHm reached 53 publication points – 36% of them had at least four publication points, while 36% were without publication points; 27% of the publications were at Level 2, 94% were written in English and 63% were journal articles (for the Humanities as a whole, the respective figures were 23% at Level 2, 57% written in English and 53% in journal articles; NIFU Report 2016). Productivity thus seems to be in line with or slightly above

national averages. The research group in Corpus Linguistics is small and has not yet achieved international standing.

Recruitment and training

There are policies in place to address gender and diversity issues, and the aim is to establish a gender balance in terms of the numbers of women in teaching and research posts and in promoted posts. Appointment to academic posts includes peer review. There are opportunities for staff to spend more time on research, based on annual competition. All staff can apply for R&D funding and money to attend conferences, but, disappointingly, there is no policy for research leave. Strategic funds are used to enhance career opportunities, including time abroad for PhD students, and opportunities for staff to address training needs, although nothing specific – ‘various incentives at different times’. There is a degree of informality in the presentation of arrangements here, and although it hints at good practice, it would have been good to see something firmer and more evidenced.

Networking

There is mention of associations with international networks but nothing is specified. There are two professors who are involved in international collaborative activity and, though there is encouragement for others to do so, the impression is that this is in the early stages, with funding applications at the moment proving unsuccessful. Furthermore, there is no evidence of different research groups on English working together, though a researcher in English also works with the Scandinavian research group.

Impact on teaching

The MA is seen as the programme where students learn about research methods, though the BA also offers the possibility of writing short research papers. For teaching training degrees, which include English, there is more satisfaction with the use of research in teaching than there is with the opportunity for students to develop research themselves. Only one PhD degree has been awarded during this period.

Other societal impact

Societal impact is found in relation to Teaching English as a Foreign Language, teacher training and the development of textbooks. The institutional self-assessment states that the importance of these textbooks ‘cannot be overstated’, but the only evidence provided by the institution are recommendations of these textbooks by the Facebook group ‘Undervisningsopplegg’.

Overall assessment

English at Hedmark is small and attached to teacher training. The Corpus Linguistics group shows some promise but has yet to make its mark. A merger seems a good way forward but more could be done in terms of collaborative activity. The decrease in external funding is slightly worrying.

Feedback

This seems to be a crucial period for the institution, with various plans and ambitions yet to come to fruition. The strategy seems good, yet the capacity to thrive in research terms depends on striking a balance between teaching and research, which may be strongly dependent on staff numbers.

3.8 Norwegian School of Economics (NHH)

Established in 1936, the Norwegian School of Economics is a public, specialised university organised in six departments. According to the institutional self-assessment, the total funding of NHH has increased from NOK 173.5 million (2013) to NOK 195.2 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure has been relatively constant throughout this period at 17% per year. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by Norwegian private sources. From 2013 to 2015, there was a relatively big increase in EU funding, from NOK 0.6 million in 2013 to almost NOK 2 million in 2015.

Within the area of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies, 16 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL in one research group (Professional & Intercultural Communication), but the institution has not submitted any research groups for evaluation. The following data were submitted by the institution: two impact case studies, but no research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

Between 2011 and 2015, the 16 researchers at NHH reached 64 publication points – 38% of them had at least four publication points. Only 13% were without publication points; 30% of publications were at Level 2, 80% in English and 69% were journal articles (for the Humanities as a whole, the respective figures were 23% at Level 2, 57% in English and 53% in journals; NIFU Report 2016).

3.8.1 Research Area: English

Organisation, leadership and strategy

English is taught at the Department of Professional and Intercultural Communication, one of six departments at the institution. The overall strategy of the institution is to be ‘among the leading business schools in Europe’. There is leadership at departmental level, but the institution has a freestanding administration, and it is not clear how strong the leadership is for English.

English is focused on teaching and researching specialised English resources, including those available via CLARIN (Common Language Resource and Technology Infrastructure); concepts and terminologies within the administrative-economic subject area; and parallel corpora of banking terminology in English and Norwegian. These subjects are well networked with European funding schemes.

Resources

Electronic language corpora compiled to serve specialised research interests are excellent.

Research production and quality

The institution produces work on English in the context of a wide range of disciplines (Law, Economics and Technology), mainly focused on the Norwegian language (contrastive studies) and based on computational approaches to the study of language. While that work seems to be well-founded, in terms of being linked to appropriate infrastructure initiatives, the impact of the research and its quality are difficult to assess based on the evidence presented. Although the degree, maturity and significance of the contribution are difficult to assess, from the description of the work in the institutional self-assessment, and the link to projects assessed at other universities, researchers appear to be involved in high-quality research on the English language.

Recruitment and training

Recruiting internationally is important to the institution, and the percentage of international staff is increasing. There are formal evaluations for staff to be promoted to full professor. PhD students are encouraged to spend time abroad and are supported to do so, and a course is being developed that will help PhD students to pursue career opportunities. Professors and associate professors are expected to spend 40% of their time on research; there is an entitlement to sabbatical leave every six semesters, given that an appropriate plan is in place. There is a plan for gender equality, though, in the case of this institution, that means more male staff. Nothing is said about gender balance in relation to management positions.

Networking

There seems to be good networking in connection with corpora projects. The work is specialised and the institution seems to have established a reputation for excellence in the field, being well networked with international researchers.

Impact on teaching

The teaching of English draws on research, but English is really a means to an end in terms of the overall focus of teaching. Nevertheless, corpora research is drawn on, and students record quite a high degree of satisfaction in relation to the research base of teaching, which drops off when they are asked about their own application of research.

Other societal impact

There is a potential for this in the area of English through links to projects at the University of Bergen. However, we again underline that we have reservations concerning the reliability of the assessment of research above.

Overall assessment

It has been difficult to assess research quality given the paucity of the evidence submitted. However we believe that there is good work being done, and that the institution has good networks nationally and internationally.

Feedback

The case for English needs to be made in its own right. The potential could be better exploited.

3.8.2 Research area: Romance languages

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The university is organised in a matrix model, which makes the assessment of specific areas difficult, as there is no clear leader for each area.

There are sensible general research goals. The area is not central but contributes to the institution's overall goals. The amount of funding is average. Especially corpus linguistics and discourse studies show good collaboration outside the university, but translation studies and terminology studies, which ought to be central, do not seem to be sufficiently supported.

Resources

The institution provides adequate resources, but the documentation does not enable an assessment of the infrastructure and its use. The balance between research and teaching seems sound, but too

much attention is given to administration (20% of each researcher's time), which entails a risk of less time being left for research.

Research production and quality

The productivity and general quality is slightly above average. There is no real contribution to advancing Romance Studies, but there are some very good contributions to interdisciplinary work with other institutions.

Recruitment and training

In general, recruiting internationally is important to the institution, and the percentage of international staff is increasing. There are formal evaluations for staff to be promoted to full professor. PhD students are encouraged to spend time abroad and are supported to do so, and a course is being developed that will help PhD students to pursue career opportunities. Professors and associate professors are expected to spend 40% of their time on research; there is an entitlement to research leave every six semesters, given that an appropriate plan is in place. There is a plan for gender equality, though, in the case of this institution, that means more male staff. Nothing is said about the gender balance in relation to management positions.

There is no specific strategy for this area apart from recruitment, mainly depending on teaching capacity. The same seems to be the case as regards training, but there is no information about this.

Networking

There is some good networking nationally, but there does not seem to be any formal networking internationally.

Impact on teaching

Most of the research is geared towards the particular profile of the curriculum (business communication) and therefore must be presumed to have a good impact.

Other societal impact

The panel found the impact case on 'Enhancing public competence in assessing textual representations of contested issues' of great social importance. The part related to the LINGCLIM project has had a very good impact.

Overall assessment

The strategy is good and focused. The potential of English at the institution could be better exploited.

Feedback

Terminology studies should be better supported. This work is noteworthy in itself and worthy of some focus. But it is also important to consider the corpus/discourse work.

3.9 Østfold University College (HiØ)

Østfold University College (HiØ) is organised in six faculties (Business, Social Sciences & Foreign Languages, Computer Sciences, Education, Engineering, Health & Social Studies and the Norwegian Theatre Academy). According to the institutional self-assessment, HiØ's total expenditure for research related to the humanities has increased from NOK 49.2 million (2013) to NOK 53 million (2015). The share of external funding of the total expenditure also increased from 1% to 2.4% in the same period. Funding from the EU is the most important source of external funding, followed by public Norwegian sources (the RCN not included).

Within the research area of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies, 14 researchers were listed for HUMEVAL. The following data were submitted by the institution: two research groups (Language Didactics, Literature & Narrativity, and Text-in-Context), one impact case study and six research area publications. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

3.9.1 Research Area: English, German, Romance languages

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The strategic plan of the institution prioritised foreign languages in study programmes until 2014, especially in teacher training. However, there was no explicit plan in place to turn the staff in English, German and French into an 'important scientific community'. Although the training of teachers is very important, the foreign languages are not a part of pedagogics [at] the teacher training Faculty, but constitute a humanistic "institute" in its own right. There is also no specific administrative support for research, but there are plans to appoint a research director this year.

Resources

There is a new and well-equipped library, also for books in foreign languages. Electronic databases are mainly in English, but staff in German and French receive support for work in other libraries.

Research production and quality

The university college produces work on English literature, linguistics, translatology and foreign language didactics. For literature, the focus is on contemporary and children's/young adults' literature, which is in line with the teacher training profile. With regard to the other fields, there is a clear focus on comparative studies between Norwegian and English/German.

Between 2011 and 2015, the 24 researchers at HiØ reached 81 publication points – 38% of them had at least four publication points. Only 21% were without publication points; 33% of publications were at Level 2, 20% in English and 44% journal articles (for the Humanities as a whole, the respective figures were 23% at Level 2, 57% in English and 53% in journals; NIFU Report 2016).

Recruitment and training

There is no recruitment plan for the area and there is no PhD programme. However, the number of staff with a PhD has increased in recent years through both national and international recruitment.

Networking

There is little evidence of strategic networking. Attempts seem to be being made to change this. However, there are many individual contacts with researchers from other universities, including abroad.

Impact on teaching

There is evidence of impact on teaching. The self-assessment indicates that BA students have the option of writing a BA thesis, but the main impact of research appears to be at the MA level.

The Wisstrans programme has had an impact on the teaching programmes of participating universities.

Other societal impact

Apart from the scholarly and interdisciplinary impact of the Wisstrans programme on teaching, there is no evidence of other societal impact.

Overall assessment

This has been difficult to assess given the paucity of evidence submitted about the quality of research. Linguistic research (especially translation studies) seems to be stronger than literary scholarship, although there are also examples of good scholarship in the area.

Feedback

The area needs leadership to develop a research strategy. The research areas of English, German and French (with Spanish under development) seem to be too fragmented at the moment. A clearer focus would be welcome.

3.10 Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) is an autonomous non-profit foundation that is independent of ideological, political or national interests. Its research is organised in three research departments. According to the institutional self-assessment, PRIO's total expenditure increased from NOK 89.3 million (2013) to NOK 114.3 million (2015). PRIO mostly depends on external funding. The share of basic funding has decreased from 16 percent (15.2 MNOK) to 14 percent (16.7 MNOK) in the same period. The RCN is the most important source of external funding, followed by other public Norwegian sources. Moreover, PRIO is one of the few institutions in HUMEVAL that has received funding from international private sources (NOK 7.8 million in 2013 and NOK 10.3 million in 2015).

Within the area of Modern and Classical Languages, Literatures and Area Studies, seven researchers were listed for HUMEVAL in one research group (Regions and Powers). The following data were submitted by the institution: one impact case study and one research area publication. The evaluation committee interviewed representatives of the institution during the project.

3.10.1 Research Area: Asian and African Studies

Organisation, leadership and strategy

The self-assessment document shows that this institution is already very clearly structured, which the panel found confirmation of. Under the leadership of its director, PRIO is organised in three thematic (not regional) research departments. The regions covered are Asia, South-East Europe, the Middle East, South Africa and America. Whereas the departments constitute the long-term institutional framework and thus maintain continuity, projects are time-limited. As a third organisational unit, the research groups are intended to be a driving force for innovation and are connected to the departments as well as to the projects. This structure is elaborated on and makes sense. The topics of the research groups include important themes, such as governance, non-state actors, gender etc. and are well and carefully chosen. PRIO has a long-term overall vision (research for a peaceful world) and it develops four-year strategic plans, which currently comprise three broad topics of importance (technological change, inequalities and insecurities, and contested international engagements). This approach makes good sense.

Resources

PRIO has a strong record of engaging in EU collaborative projects and it also receives funding from ministries and other sources. It is important that it provides access to high quality data. The plans for a global fellowship programme and the international exchange programme for PRIO researchers sound promising and should be implemented.

Research production and quality

PRIO has been ranked very highly with regard to research production and quality. The submitted articles range between excellent and very good. They reflect high-quality research in the disciplines. Under the thematic headings, they concern the most important regions for conflict-resolution (e.g. Palestine) and are thus substantial, not only for researchers but also in relation to providing political advice and informing a broader public. Comparative aspects could be strengthened.

In terms of bibliometric data, between 2011 and 2015, the seven researchers listed in PRIO reached 42 publication points – 71% of them had at least four publication points. Only 14% were without publication points; 37% of publications were at Level 2, 82% in English and 66% were journal articles

(for the Humanities as a whole, the respective figures were 23% at Level 2, 57% in English and 53% in journals; NIFU Report 2016).

Recruitment and training

The documentation indicates sufficient national and international mobility. Researchers have at least two-thirds of their time for projects. Considering that, apart from PhD and MA supervision, teaching is not a normal task in an independent research institute (although some staff may have adjunct professorships at HEIs), this proportion could be greater.

Networking

Being a research institute, PRIO has very strong links with academic institutions, both nationally and internationally, which are integral to their research success. Through their networks, they contribute to international awareness of this Norwegian institute.

Impact on teaching

PRIO is a research institute, but it does engage in some teaching as well, such as in the supervision of MA and PhD theses. There are even some grants for MA candidates, which is to be applauded. Furthermore, there are regular summer courses. Many researchers teach at other institutions in addition to their PRIO research. The multidisciplinary approach as well as the strong ties to the disciplines are considered important. Furthermore, there are public lectures addressing significant topics.

Other societal impact

The case study, 'Law trumps power at sea', demonstrates significant research on peaceful conflict management, the results of which were not only presented in scientific publications but also to a network of researchers and policymakers at a conference held in Oslo in 2000. The research focused on the pacifying impact of international law on maritime disputes in South East Asia. The integration of colleagues in the region and the bringing together of specialists in different fields is especially commendable. PRIO states that it has facilitated bridge-building between legal experts and geopolitical analysts, which is highly laudable. The very fact of the conferences and the bringing together of specialists in different fields, as well as the distribution of the publications of this group, is cited as evidence of impact. The panel found this argument plausible.

The general public are contacted and informed via social media and blogs, which is an important contribution. It would be interesting to know how well-known these blogs etc. are in Norway, but they are surely a very good and serious source of information.

Overall assessment

This is an internationally well-known, high-quality research institute that is also involved in teaching to a certain extent. Its topic is obviously of extreme importance.

Feedback

The panel felt that PRIO demonstrated excellent research related to an important vision, which deserves every encouragement. PRIO appears to have researchers from a variety of disciplines, and their research is not oriented around individual academic disciplines. The 'solid disciplinary competence' mentioned in the institutional self-assessment, which forms the basis for their multidisciplinary research in close collaboration with the academic sector, is very valuable.

4 Assessment of research groups

4.1 NTNUHF ACT: Antiquity and the Classical Tradition

Overall score: 4

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This is a small but highly dynamic group. It appears to be loosely structured but members work together on common subjects (e.g. Ovid, translation in Antiquity). Its common theme is very broad, covering the study of classical literature in antiquity and its reception until today. Reception studies, however, are pointed out as a focus area (termed ‘methodology’ in the self-assessment). To what extent the activities of the two UK members should be included in the assessment is not quite clear. They contribute international capacity and to creating what seems to be an inspiring research milieu. External funding from the RCN has been obtained for the project ‘The Heterosexual Tradition of Homoerotic Poetics’, which runs for four years.

Research production and quality

The material listed for evaluation is very limited and assessment is therefore difficult. Taken as a whole, this is a very productive group with a scholarly output of high quality and international impact. However, there are only three members eligible for assessment.

Recruitment and training

There is a strong element of international collaboration, also with respect to the recruitment and training of PhD students.

Networking

The individual members are engaged in a variety of collaborative projects, both in Norway and abroad. They also collaborate with non-academic partners, translating classics etc.

Impact on teaching

The tenured staff – i.e. the group members listed for evaluation – teach at all university levels, and also in this context, collaborate with universities abroad.

Overall assessment

As previously stated, this is a difficult group to evaluate because only three members are listed for evaluation. The general impression is of a very dynamic and active group that combines impressive international impact with popular outreach in Norway. It sees itself as the flagship of classics research in Norway. The general theme is very broad indeed, covering the entire field of Greek-Roman literature and its later reception. However, it is not quite clear from the self-assessment report whether the theme of ‘classical reception’ should be seen as the group’s common ground. In any case, the members are good at finding common sub-themes, and there can be no doubt that this creates synergies, which also inspires students and young researchers.

Feedback

It would be good to clarify the status of the group, and the group members, and how it fits the current exercise. However, there is much to congratulate researchers on in terms of collaboration and output.

4.2 NTNUHF Enlightenment News

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This research group is relatively new. According to the group's self-assessment, it plans to bring together researchers working on history, literary studies, book history, and digital humanities to work on recently digitised archives of news publications from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. As the group self-assessment points out, existing publications of group members do not yet reflect this new ambition, and little evidence is provided of previous work in digital humanities at NTNU. Nonetheless, the institution clearly has confidence in the group's future, as it has designated it a 'spearhead' project and has allocated it funding for PhD and postdoctoral positions. An external peer review was used to underpin decisions about which groups to prioritise. The group is led by a full professor with a strong publication record, though digital humanities appears to be a new interest. The group has clear publication plans and is active in organising and participating in conferences. It has been successful in gaining some further external funding.

Research production and quality

The papers submitted predate the formation of the group and have no connection to research on digitised archives of news publications. They are also variable in quality, one being an unpublished part of a literature review for a doctoral thesis, another a short essay not up to journal standards, alongside some good professional work. This may not provide a good guide to the work that can be expected of the group in future.

Recruitment and training

The group has robust procedures for selecting PhD students and postdoctoral scholars. As yet, recruitment is on a small scale, but both the PhD student and the postdoctoral scholar will spend time at important institutions abroad to gain experience.

Networking

The group's members are developing relations with a range of institutions in the USA, UK, and elsewhere in Europe. Members also participate extensively in international conferences. This is a very impressive aspect of the group's activity and they have succeeded in engaging with high-quality researchers worldwide.

Impact on teaching

Coursework and thesis writing are being developed within the group's research area.

Overall assessment

This group is currently small and still in the process of development in its research area. It has the potential to become a successful research group in an expanding area using innovative methods, but this is for the future to tell. The publication scores are what prevent the overall score from being higher.

Feedback

There is much potential in this group, and the achievements in terms of networking in particular are excellent. It needs to demonstrate more strength in its underpinning of research to raise its overall score.

4.3 UiBHF – The Borders of Europe

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The group is broad and interdisciplinary. It studies 'the inclusionary and exclusionary notions of Europeanness by examining the aesthetics and cultural poetics of bordering'. A team from the Foreign Languages Department is leading. The group's strategy is to disseminate research results in scholarly anthologies and journals (with international contributions), exhibitions, newspaper articles and conference lectures. The idea is to extend this with educational material in cooperation with human rights NGOs and concentration camp memorial sites. Applications for European funding have not been successful so far. Funding to date has come from the university and the RCN. Planned cooperation with Israeli scholars does not yet seem to have been initiated after a first visit in 2015.

Research production and quality

Based on the works submitted for evaluation, the quality is generally rather modest. As a whole, the group contributes to the theory of crossing borders. The concept of borders refers to real, physical borders between countries, but also as a site for socio-cultural contacts and conflicts, also in terms of communication. The group's interdisciplinary composition, as well as the fact that, in the year it was founded, it incorporated two rather diverse earlier groups, leads to an impression of diversity, if not disparity. There seems to be no clear single focus, and there are too many theoretical notions and concepts for a strong sense of cohesion.

Recruitment and training

According to the self-assessment, several PhD students have been involved in the group's research. It is not clear how the PhDs have been funded.

Networking

The strengths of the group include the relevance of its topic, its interdisciplinary and its broad network, both internationally and nationally and also with non-academic (NGO) partners. The network does not seem to have been formalised, however.

Impact on teaching

The tenured members of the group link their research with their teaching on the topics of the borders of Europe at the MA and PhD level, and to a lesser extent at BA level.

Overall assessment

The strength of the group lies in its combination of interdisciplinarity and breadth. Furthermore it has a broad (international) network, also with non-academic organisations (NGO). Its weakness lies in thematic and theoretical overstretching, as well as in publications that are sometimes not strong enough.

Feedback

The group might profit from a stronger thematic and theoretical unity. This might be developed by taking the overall topic, 'the borders of Europe' as a real focus, not as an umbrella under which diverse smaller research projects can be gathered. The assessors also felt that the group might be invigorated by the incorporation of younger colleagues (the age profile of the principal members currently seems to be four colleagues aged over 60, one over 50, and only one aged between 40 and 50). Some thought might also be given to the publication strategy: three of the six articles submitted were taken from one volume (edited by members of the group). On the one hand, this might be taken to suggest coherence, but, on the other hand, it can sometimes be better to publish elsewhere, in books and journals edited by other people.

4.4 UiBHF – Conditions

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

There is little evidence of any systematic organisation of this group, which is more of a loose confederation of researchers. It appears that they may, or may not, act in concert, as they wish. As a result, it seems that any strategy they pursue is more apparent than real, i.e. it arises organically rather than as the result of a communal deliberative process. This does not appear to be a recipe for success. The group is in principle supported by the institution, but, due to an unclear profile, it has problems obtaining funds.

Research production and quality

Their research publications are solid, but not outstanding. This could well be a reflection of this group's rather laissez-faire attitude. The research effort seems diffuse. The publication quantity is average, but the quality varies significantly. The top publication (the only one at international level) is marginal in relation to the group's central subject (didactics).

Recruitment and training

This seems to be good, but it does not appear to be planned, given the organisational context in which it occurs. In short, it is general good practice that can be expected of any academic group. There is apparently nothing distinctive, innovative or even particularly planned here.

Networking

The group has made fair efforts at international networking, though this is constrained by their limited success in attracting funding. The group is very passive with regard to conferences: they appear to attend but not organise such events. The networking is much better at the national level, which is no doubt due to the subject.

Impact on teaching

Given the focus of the group, we would have expected to see much more concrete evidence of an impact on teaching at the local, national and international level. As it stands, the panel was left assuming that some people have had their teaching informed by some of their research outputs, but we were not provided with any satisfactory evidence. Moreover, it is not clear whether the work of the group has any direct impact on the institution's study programmes.

Overall assessment

The group produces solid research set in a poorly coordinated and governed research grouping. It is notable that this group does not feature as a focus area in the university strategy document. There is potential, but it still has a long way to go to attain international standard.

Feedback

The university needs to take an active interest in this group. It clearly has potential but gives the impression of having been left to its own devices for too long. The group has not proven capable of powerful and directed self-governance. The university should help it by taking some ownership of the management and membership of the group with a view to relaunching it as a more focused, goal-driven and ambitious grouping.

4.5 UiBHF – LINGCLIM

Overall score: 4

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The group is fundamentally cross-disciplinary but with a focus on linguistics and text linguistics. This group has a clear, well-articulated plan, which meshes well with their outputs and activities. Goals are reasonable and contribute directly to the overall goals of the institution. The group is clearly well organised and managed. It is well-funded and supported by the institution.

Research production and quality

Their publications demonstrate good work that matches their objectives. The quality is high. The productivity is good with publications in international journals. The work opens new perspectives. However, interdisciplinary approaches do not really seem to be fully exploited and their methodology needs to be developed. Some of the research could be a little more reflective, perhaps, but they are nonetheless doing interesting interdisciplinary work.

Recruitment and training

There is a good focus on recruitment and an excellent environment for the PhD students.

Networking

A real strength for this group is that they organise as well as attend conferences. They are clearly proactive in their networking activities. They collaborate closely with Norwegian colleagues. However, it is not obvious to what extent this collaboration helps the group to advance its strategy, which seems to have been stable.

Impact on teaching

The research of the group has no visible relevance for the study programmes at the institution.

Overall assessment

This is a good group that could further improve its interdisciplinary approaches and methodology.

Feedback

This group is well funded and is clearly developing in the right direction. However, given the importance of the issue of climate change in general, and for the host institution in particular, the University should be making sure that the work of this group is mainstreamed in teaching across a range of areas at the University of Bergen.

4.6 UiBHF – Literature and Religion

Overall score: 4

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This research group was founded in 2011 under the title 'Modernism and Christianity' and reconstituted in 2015 under its present title. The title is probably rather too broad. The structure and organisation of the research group seems to be very efficient and convincing. It is supported by UiB's Faculty of Humanities, at the departmental level, and by the Bergen Research Foundation, but it has been unsuccessful in its application to the RCN. This application is to be resubmitted. It is led by a scholar who has an international reputation (reported on by external assessors and committee).

Research production and quality

Publications are generally of quite high quality. The range of topics is wide. One book publication sets out the field extremely ably. Other contributions mostly analyse case studies.

Recruitment and training

The research group successfully integrates PhD candidates. The work of the PhD candidates is very good. However, there is no career support as yet for PhD students or postdoctoral fellows.

Networking

There is very good evidence of networking in the UK, the Netherlands and Germany.

Impact on teaching

Members of the research group apply their research results in their academic teaching, and research groups are expected to do so by UiB.

Overall assessment

This research group addresses a very important topic and one scholar's work is leading in the field. It offers the possibility to compare religious and literary phenomena across cultural divides.

Feedback

The presented publications on case studies are quite convincing. More comparative studies would be desirable.

4.7 UiOHF – China Airborne

Overall score: 5

Research production and quality: 5

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This research group was only formed in 2014, but has already made a strong impression. Its cross-disciplinary organisation is innovative, although existing projects elsewhere combining Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences in the field of climate change have proven to be successful, which bodes well for this research group. It has strong leadership by experienced researchers in the separate component disciplines. It has been made a priority by UiOHF and, according to the institution's self-assessment, has attracted considerable resources in its short formal existence. The research group's personnel at UiO are relatively few, but they work closely with collaborators in China.

Research production and quality

According to the group self-assessment, this research group is quite recently founded and cannot yet be expected to have reached its full potential in terms of research output. Nevertheless, based on the previous track record of its leading members and its detailed plans for publication, together with the quality of most of the sample outputs submitted, the evaluation by the RCN in 2014 and the self-assessment of the group's future publication seem to be fully justified. The members of the group mostly publish in English and several of their papers are published in high-quality academic journals.

Recruitment

The research group has fully appropriate procedures for recruiting at postgraduate level and above. The group's leaders are clearly concerned with providing first-class training opportunities for PhD students, and, according to the group self-assessment, they have made excellent progress in this respect in a short space of time.

Networking

The group's members have excellent relationships with leading researchers and institutions in China, the USA and Europe. Chinese sources, including one collaborating university, provide significant funding. Communications, meetings and conferences between collaborators all seem to be very good. International collaboration lies at the heart of the group's understanding of its project.

Impact on teaching

The group's self-assessment provides some information about links between research and teaching. It is difficult to judge how significant this is to students.

Overall assessment

Giving all due attention to the relative newness of the research group, it has the potential to be a star group, as has already been identified by its institution and by the RCN. It is not possible to fully assess the work of this research group in the context of HUMEVAL, because the scientific work of the climate scientists who collaborate with the IKOS members does not fall within the sphere of the Humanities. This should be seen as a problem for the research assessment procedures, however, and not for the research group itself. The topic of the research group is highly relevant, and we especially welcome the combination of papers from the natural sciences and the humanities.

Feedback

We encourage further research on this topic. The collaboration of Chinese and Norwegian researchers is certainly of high value. The international network of researchers working on similar topics is also very important. One possible line of development could be the involvement of specialists from human geography – an interesting research question would be the geographical distribution of protests and pollution.

4.8 UiOHF – Historical linguistics

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation leadership, strategy and resources

This is a group with no clear, explicit strategy. This either reflects, or contributes to, the somewhat inchoate nature of the research outputs the group produces.

Research production and quality

The group has produced a range of work, much of which is solid, some that is excellent and some that is not so strong.

Recruitment and training

Recruitment and training seem to be good and quite proactive.

Networking

Networking appears to be good. They seem to follow an active strategy here, initiating and leading, as well as responding to, collaborative opportunities.

Impact on teaching

The impact on teaching is spelt out clearly; this is not exceptional, but within the home university, the group has made a contribution. We think that the group has potential to have a greater national and international impact.

Overall assessment

The group has real potential that needs to be unlocked.

Feedback

The group needs to be helped to bring its research strategy into focus. It starts from a strong position and – probably with some institutional assistance – it should be able to develop a research strategy and research governance structure that could bring more direction to its research with a view to enhancing its coherence and impact.

4.9 UiOHF Political, Social and Ideological Change in the Middle East

Overall score: 5

Research production and quality: 5

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The group has a clear focus on a set of interrelated research topics in Middle East studies, for which they have a strong international reputation. It is led by top scholars in the field, and is very active as a group, holding regular workshops and conferences. Group members come from a range of disciplines, which all have a role to play in the development of excellent research in Area Studies. The group attracts considerable external funding, in no small part because of the policy-related significance of much of its research, and it uses this funding to very good effect. The group is rightly given high priority status by IKOS and UiO in general.

Research production and quality

The senior members of this group have a strong publication record going back to the 1990s, and this has continued and been strengthened through the recruitment of new members since the group was formally established in 2011. Several of the submitted papers are fully up to the highest international standard in this field. Group members publish in leading journals that are widely read internationally.

Recruitment and training

The group has a high level of recruitment of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers in terms of both numbers and quality, funded partly by external sources and partly by UiOHF. These researchers have opportunities to work for extended periods of time in important Middle East institutions. The supervision and training offered to this new generation of researchers appear to be excellent.

Networking

The group has developed a wide range of collaborative links, including with research institutions within Norway and internationally, with corporations, and with the public sector, including relevant government ministries. Its members are involved in many international conferences and seminars at the highest level, and also work with Norwegian embassies in Middle Eastern countries.

Impact on teaching

In addition to supervision at the doctoral level, the group's research feeds into teaching on the Middle East at BA and MA levels.

Overall assessment

This is a well-established and productive research group with a good critical mass for continued development. It is a strong candidate to be identified as a star group.

Feedback

It would be good to encourage researchers at the doctoral and postdoctoral level to publish in English and in international journals.

4.10 UiOHF – Traveling Texts

Overall score: 4

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The group appears to have a very sensible strategy, combining a wide variety of disciplines and working on 12 different strands, each of which will prepare a workshop during the period 2014-18. Apart from funding from the RCN, no external funding has so far been obtained (a SAMKUL application in early 2016 was apparently not successful), but the group expresses an ambition to apply for Centre of Excellence status in 2020. As a prioritised thematic area, the group has received funding from the university for the period 2014–18; this includes two PhD students and one postdoc.

Research production and quality

Based on the works submitted for evaluation, the quality is generally very good. As a whole, the group contributes to the emerging field of translation studies, not only through its case studies but also theoretically. However, not all the works submitted fall within the translation theme as it is described in the group's self-assessment (some members 'have more recently turned to this field and have not yet published works with transnational or translational components'). This may be remedied to some extent by adopting a broader definition of the overall theme.

Recruitment and training

One of the two PhDs financed by the university was recruited from abroad (Spain). In addition to the two PhDs and the postdoc financed by the university, two other PhDs, paid by a completion grant from the university, have been included, and another PhD student paid by her employer has also joined the group. As part of their training, these young researchers are all engaged in organising the workshops that form the core of the group's common activities. There seems to be no separate PhD training programme.

Networking

The strengths of the group include its interdisciplinarity and its broad network, both internationally and nationally, and also with non-academic partners (Norwegian Association of Literary Translators).

Impact on teaching

The tenured members of the group link their teaching to their research in translation studies at the MA and PhD level and to a lesser extent at BA level.

Overall assessment

The strength of the group lies in its combination of interdisciplinarity and a clear thematic focus. Furthermore, it has a broad network, both internationally and nationally, and also with non-academic partners (Norwegian Association of Literary Translators). This is an active group that appears to function very well. It also reaches out to a broader audience through the electronic platform that it aims to create in collaboration with the Norwegian Association of Literary Translators.

Feedback

The common subject – translation and the interplay between foreign and domestic and how translation changes cultural products – is eminently suited as a common field for a cross-disciplinary research group and, eventually, for a Centre of Excellence. However, judging from the submitted publications, the common theme is too narrowly described in the self-assessment. The theme could perhaps benefit from being broadened by also including editions of older texts – for example editions of Horace in the early modern period and Ibsen and Wergeland in 20th century Norway. This would more accurately reflect the actual research of the members of the group, and, given that such editorial enterprises face the same fundamental challenges as translations, this would enable the presentation of texts written in another time and/or place to a contemporary readership. In short, the advice would be to broaden the ‘translation notion’.

4.11 UiTHSL – Russian Space

Overall score: 4

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This research group has only existed since January 2015. The topic is well chosen; it reflects the importance of the ‘spatial turn’. The group leader is a very well-known expert with an excellent academic reputation internationally. The group has already organised two PhD projects that fit the research topic very well. These PhD projects started in 2015 and 2016 respectively. This strategy for junior researchers is very promising. The topical homogeneity of the research group is not yet fully embedded – this seems to be due to the different disciplinary traditions of the researchers involved.

Research production and quality

Research publications address highly important and timely issues (Pussy Riot, Maidan). The research group analyses a broad range of cultural artefacts (literature, pop music, film) and embeds its findings in a broader political and societal context. The research of the group members is innovative and distinct from that conducted elsewhere in Europe and the USA. The senior members of the group mostly publish in English; their papers appear in high-quality academic journals.

Recruitment and training

The research group has attracted two very gifted PhD candidates with good field experience and very good MA papers. The research group provides excellent international opportunities for the junior scholars and organises academic exchanges.

Networking

The group is developing collaborative relationships with highly renowned experts from Russia, Sweden, Israel and the UK. It also has some successful participation in international conferences.

Impact on teaching

Teaching is described as research-led, though the group provides little detail on this in its self-assessment. The involvement of PhD candidates in undergraduate teaching is important and highly valued.

Overall assessment

This is a very promising research group. There is a good degree of collaboration between the researchers who address Russian topics. It would be very desirable to also further integrate the two researchers who do not have a background in Russian studies.

Feedback

We encourage the important work of this research group. The topical framework is very promising, and the involved researchers display a high degree of commitment. The announced focus on the North is not very visible yet. We welcome this important topic and suggest a multidisciplinary approach (cultural construction of the North, political claims to the North Pole, ethnic and national aspects etc.).

4.12 UiTHSL – CLEAR

Overall score: 4

Research production and quality: 5

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This is a growing group that is clearly capable of producing high-quality research. However, its research strategy is poorly articulated. The panel saw a list of activities, not an outline of what they want to do and why. We have little doubt that they have such a plan – but it is articulated here in a somewhat post hoc way, rather than in a prospective fashion.

Research production and quality

The group is producing research of high quality. A clear highlight is the rigour that they bring to much of their work on cognitive linguistics through the exploitation of the Russian National Corpus. This is a gold thread running through much of their work. In spite of some pieces not being of the highest quality, the strength of the work based on the Russian National Corpus means that this group is probably internationally leading in this area. The university is right to perceive this as an area that is making an impact. This excellence is reflected in the score awarded.

Recruitment and training

Recruitment and training seem to be fully adequate, though, perhaps by providing more detail, they might have been able to demonstrate that what they are doing goes beyond what one would normally expect of a research group. We suspect they are training their students in the use of corpora, for example, but the brief overview of training and recruitment does not mention this.

Networking

They network well, but the impression given is one of passivity: they participate but they do not initiate and lead. This section needs more detail. As it stands, this looks like a set of vague statements about networking divorced from any strategic planning.

Impact on teaching

Good, but decidedly local in flavour. This group should not just be providing teaching and training nationally. They also clearly have the potential to take the lead internationally in this area. We were not persuaded by the impact case study CLEAR Resources for Russian that they are doing this. While the potential exists, we did not think that the impact case study provided very good evidence of the actual impact achieved, as opposed to the potential for impact.

Overall assessment

A good group based around a core of excellent researchers, they nevertheless give the impression of being in a strategic vacuum in which they are not taking full advantage of their excellence to assert strategic leadership in their field.

Feedback

The group needs a clearer, prospective research strategy. That strategy should aim to make the group more ambitious, taking the initiative in research, teaching, training and networking at the local, national and international level.

4.13 UiA – Early Modern and Modern Research Group

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 4

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This group has built on two previous interdisciplinary groups, and sees its primary function in terms of networking within Norway and with other European researchers. Its title is very broad, but it defines itself more narrowly as being concerned with ‘the interplay between epistemological and artistic processes’ and ‘new ways of organising urban life’. It is led by a Renaissance scholar with a reasonable publishing record, particularly on Shakespeare. The paperwork, however, seems perfunctory, and, beyond the ambition to network, there seems to be little evidence of overall strategy or leadership. Much more coherence is found in the description of the impact case (Tolerance and the City: Human Interaction in Social and Urban Space) where the urban-architectural theme is in focus, but this theme is not reflected in the submitted publications. Funding may be an issue as well as UiA’s ability to support researchers (see UiA’s institutional self-assessment). There is some evidence of research funding.

Research production and quality

The papers submitted are very varied in terms of subject matter, but mostly of very good quality.

Recruitment and training

Reference is made to the recruitment of PhD students and their integration into the projects of individual researchers and participation in the programme. However, no reference is made to training. The documentation of members and financing only lists two PhD students and one postdoc.

Networking

Networking is a strength, but it is unclear whether this is the result of individual researchers' efforts. Again, the documentation is unclear and not well-structured.

Impact on teaching

UiA's institutional self-assessment mentions the importance of teaching, but nothing about this is found in the group's self-assessment.

Overall assessment

While the quality of the individual publications is quite high, this is a rather disappointing submission in terms of self-presentation, and it fails to make a strategic case. The urban architectural theme that figures prominently in the impact case is not reflected in the submitted publications, which makes it difficult to assess the relationship between the research group as such and this more specific theme. Networking is a strength, but too little information is provided about how, why and what it is contributing.

Feedback

This is a difficult group to assess because the evidence is insufficiently elaborated. The title does not really match the description of the research area, and at the moment it is too broad to be very strategic. Some thinking needs to be done around aims and strategy.

4.14 HiHm – Corpus Linguistics

Overall score: 2

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This is a new group that is modest in size. It appears to have some institutional support and is mentioned in the institutional overview as a part of the English Department. In terms of strategy, it seems to have opted to focus narrowly on learner corpus research as its principal area of effort. This is sensible for a small group, but this strategy had to be inferred by the panel, as it was not made explicit in the self-assessment. This lack of explicit identification of strategy probably speaks of an organic approach to research strategy.

Research production and quality

There is a spread of work, but nothing at the really top end.

Recruitment and training

Support is of a basic quality that one would expect from any well-funded research institution. There is nothing innovative, nothing that seems to be related to the unit's research strategy and nothing

that is internationally (or nationally) focused. To their credit, they have developed training modules related to the methods that they use and invite overseas scholars to participate in providing this training.

Networking

It is difficult to judge the fit of networking with their strategy, but the group does link with relevant groups in learner corpus research, which the panel assumes to be a major area of focus for them. The panel felt that their approach was rather passive in that they do not organise international workshops or conferences.

Impact on teaching

At the institutional level, an impact case was submitted on the teaching of English, but the example is from a professor who is not part of the group. In the group's self-assessment, however, it is stated that, due to the focus on learner language, the research of CorLing is relevant to many of the study programmes at HiHm, which concentrates on teacher training education.

Overall assessment

A small group like this would benefit from a more expressly stated strategy, with suitable leadership to support it.

Feedback

The group needs to articulate its strategy more clearly. That strategy should include reaching out across the institution, as there are researchers there who should be working with this group (if they are not doing so already). In short, this group has potential, but needs help to bring focus to its work.

HiØ – Literature and Narrativity

Overall score: 3

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This research group has existed since 2012. As the group self-assessment report states, the main concept of narrativity is very broad. It was therefore wise to concentrate on the notion of 'identity', although this still seems too broad a topic for an anthology; there is no overall 'glue', and so the subtopics seem rather disparate. Maybe it would be better to tackle a collaborative monograph with a well-designed structure of chapters instead. There seems to be no real strategy for knowledge exchange, nor for external funding.

Research production and quality

The quality of the research produced is rather uneven. There are some commonsensical articles that address very practical issues, while other articles represent important contributions to the research in the field (with important publishers such as de Gruyter).

Recruitment and training

Østfold University College does not have a PhD programme.

Networking

There is no evidence of structural networking. Attempts seem to be being made to change this.

Impact on teaching

The impact on teaching seems to be high. The teaching at Østfold University College is research-based.

Overall assessment

The topic of the research group is quite promising. The research output could be more homogenous in terms of quality and focus. There could be a greater sense of urgency as regards obtaining external funding and fostering (inter)national cooperation.

Feedback

This research group addresses important topics and combines literary studies with social anthropology. The theoretical basis of some of the contributions could be broader and more explicit, some of the articles focus too much on the content of the text and references to state-of-the-art research in the field are sometimes lacking.

4.15 HiØ – Text in Context

Overall score: 2

Research production and quality: 3

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

The group has a democratic organisation without a strong leader. The strategy reflects this insofar as its strategy is to work on anthologies. The group has no place in the overall goals of the institution. The library resource provides only adequate support. The financial (and moral) support from the institution has more or less disappeared and the search for external funding has just begun.

Research production and quality

The quality of individual contributions is from good to fair. The research is described as interdisciplinary and the 'method' is to work on anthologies and discussions in the preparation process. However, there is no consistent methodology in place to profit (better) from the different disciplines involved.

Recruitment assessment by subpanel

According to the self-assessment, there are no PhD study programmes at HiØ and no PhD students allocated to the area.

Networking

There are some good international partners, but no robust research strategy seems to have developed from this cooperation. There are no partners outside academia.

Impact on teaching

There is no direct impact on study programmes. The group's research may be relevant to some students at all levels, however.

Overall assessment

This group produces research of fair quality. There is neither an apparent strategy nor adequate funding. Networking could be improved as well as recruitment strategies and impact on teaching.

Feedback

The most important advice to this group would be to develop an overall strategy in which all the elements that were assessed here would play a role.

4.16 PRIO – Regions and Powers

Overall score: 5

Research production and quality: 5

Organisation, leadership, strategy and resources

This research group has existed since 2011. The title is probably rather too broad. It would be better to include the main focus of the research group ('non-western actors') in the title.

Research production and quality

The group's publications address highly important and timely issues in several regions of the world. The choice of topics is very important. PRIO covers problems from an interdisciplinary perspective that are commonly underrepresented in western universities.

Recruitment and training

The research group successfully integrates PhD candidates.

Networking

PRIO's international network in the USA, Brazil, France and Sweden is impressive. This cooperation is reflected in the publications.

Impact on teaching

Members of the research group are involved in teaching at summer schools and research schools.

Overall assessment

This is a very promising research group. The research output addresses important topics. The quality is very high.

Feedback

We welcome the innovative choice of topics in the research production. At the same time, it would be desirable to stress comparative aspects.

5 Reference list

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6 List of abbreviations used in the reports

Abbreviation	Meaning
AHO	Oslo School of Architecture and Design
ATH	Ansgar University College and Theological Seminary
BI	BI Norwegian Business School
BVH	Buskerud and Vestfold University College
COST	European Cooperation in Science and Technology
CRISTin	Current Research Information System in Norway
DHS	Diakonhjemmet University College
ELT	English Language Teaching
FIH	Fjellhaug International University College
FP	EU Framework Programme
FRIPRO	RCN's 'bottom-up' funding instrument for investigator-initiated research
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HERD	Higher Education Expenditure on R&D
HiHm	Hedmark University College
HiL	Lillehammer University College
HiØ	Østfold University College
HiOA	Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences
HiT /TUC	Telemark University College
HUMEVAL	This evaluation of the Humanities in Norway
HVO	Volda University College
IFS	Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies
IKOS	Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (UiOHF)
ILOS	Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages (UiOHF)
LINGCLIM	Linguistic Representations of Climate Change Discourse (UiBHF research group)
LUNA	Faculty of Education and Natural Sciences (HiHm)
MEG–C	The Middle English Grammar Corpus (UiS)
MF	Norwegian School of Theology
MHS	School of Mission and Theology
NHH	Norwegian School of Economics

NIFU	Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education
NIKU	Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research
NLA	NLA University College
NMH	Norwegian Academy of Music
NOKUT	The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education
NTNU	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
NTNUHF	Norwegian University of Science and Technology Faculty of humanities
NTNUMuseum	Norwegian University of Science and Technology University Museum
PRIO	Peace Research Institute, Oslo
RCN	Research Council of Norway
REF	UK Research Excellence Framework (a system for performance-based research funding)
SAMKUL	Cultural conditions underlying social change (RCN research programme)
SH/SAMAS	Sámi University of Applied Sciences
UHR	Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions
UiA	University of Agder
UiB	University of Bergen
UiBHF	University of Bergen Faculty of Humanities
UiBMuseum	University of Bergen University Museum
UiBSV	University of Bergen Faculty of Social Sciences
UiN	Nordland University
UiO	University of Oslo
UiOHF	University of Oslo Faculty of Humanities
UiOMuseum/KHM	University of Oslo Museum of Cultural History
UiOTF	University of Oslo Faculty of Theology
UIS	University of Stavanger
UiSMuseum	University of Stavanger Museum of Archaeology
UiT	The Arctic University of Norway
UiTHSL	The Arctic University of Norway, Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education
UiTmuseum	The Arctic University of Norway University Museum
UNI	UNI Research (In the case of this evaluation specifically the UNI Research Rokkan Centre)
WoS	Thomson-Reuters Web of Science

7 List of panel members

Chair	Visser	Anthonya	University of Leiden
Secretary	Melin	Göran	Technopolis/Faugert &Co
	Anderson	Linda	University of Newcastle
	McEnery	Tony	University of Lancaster
	Nølke	Henning	University of Aarhus
	Schmidt	Ulrich	University of St. Gallen
	Schneider	Irene	University of Göttingen
	Skovgaard-Petersen	Karen	Society for Danish Language and Literature
	Stockman	Norman	University of Aberdeen