

# Appendix A: Terms of References (ToR)

The board of the Faculty of Health Sciences, UiT the Arctic University of Norway, mandates the evaluation committee appointed by the Research Council of Norway (RCN) to assess the Department of Social Education based on the following Terms of Reference.

## Assessment

You are asked to assess the organisation, quality and diversity of research conducted by Department of Social Education and The Arctic Centre for Welfare and Disability Research (ASVF) as well as its relevance to institutional and sectoral purposes, and to society at large. You should do so by judging the unit's performance based on the following five assessment criteria (a. to e.). Be sure to take current international trends and developments in science and society into account in your analysis.

- a) Strategy, resources and organisation
- b) Research production, quality and integrity
- c) Diversity and equality
- d) Relevance to institutional and sectoral purposes
- e) Relevance to society

For a description of these criteria, see Chapter 2 of the life sciences evaluation protocol. Please provide a written assessment for each of the five criteria. Please also provide recommendations for improvement. We ask you to pay special attention to the following four aspects in your assessment:

### 1. Relevance to a changing society

UiT's strategy "Eallju – Developing the High North: UiT's strategy towards 2030" acknowledges the need for academic environments to develop research covering major societal challenges, hence adapting to a changing society. During the 40 years of existence of our bachelor program in social education, both the program and the understanding of disability has undergone major changes. For a long time, disabilities (from developmental disabilities to mobility impairments) were viewed as a health problem / challenge. In line with recent developments, we understand the individual as possessing fundamental rights that the authorities and society shall ensure. The focus of our current research and education programmes is to contribute knowledge on factors that promote or hinder the participation of vulnerable people and persons at different functional levels in the various areas of society. We kindly ask the committee to evaluate how well our research focus is adapted to meet the challenges within a changing and diverse democratic society, thus how well our research has developed in line with the understanding of disability.

### 2. Inclusion of people with disabilities and representatives from vulnerable groups in work and research

Given our department's strong belief that health and welfare services and research will be much better if we include those concerned, we have over the last decade experimented with participatory approaches both in research, teaching and in our work environment. This is in

line with UiT's strategy focusing on promoting co-creation. During the last 15 years our understanding of participatory research has developed from what can be called "user involvement" to "co-production" and "co-creation". We have had research participants from Sami, immigrants and refugees, and people with disabilities. And lately also from user organisations, municipalities and municipal services, and public authorities such as the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organization (NAV) and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS).

We also have colleagues from a work inclusion workplace (INKO) who participate in "Permanently Adapted Work" (VTA) at a daily basis at our department. They also participate in research and teaching, and researchers at our department undertake on-going evaluations of this VTA-measure.

We kindly ask the committee to evaluate our method development and inclusion strategies to the meet the expectations of inclusion and participation within a diverse society. We welcome suggestions on future research directions growing out of our method development and inclusion strategies that can further strengthen our ability to contribute with research to promote the participation of vulnerable people and persons at different functional levels in the various areas of society.

### **3. Innovative research and dissemination**

Prioritising knowledge development and innovative dissemination is one of UiT's strategic aims. Our department tries to be innovative in the whole research process; in developing proposals, in data gathering processes, in how we work with, and analyse our data, and in our dissemination. But we also try to both encourage and research innovation. We undertake action research and take use of artistic methods. Our department aims at research dissemination both to the general public and the scientific community. We initiate podcasts, videos, feature articles, seminars/conferences, as well as inviting youths and kids to research organised activities as part of the National Science Week in Norway.

We try to create arenas where our researchers can contribute their knowledge to the society. Such activities are organised under the umbrella of ASVF, and include political debates, lunch seminars, concerts and so on. Our goal is to make research available for a broader public, while receiving feedback and promote discussions with those attending.

We encourage the committee to evaluate our innovative capacity both when it relates to our research and dissemination, as well as in how we research innovation. Also, we welcome suggestions on future research directions that can further strengthen our ability to contribute with innovative research and innovative dissemination.

### **4. Minorities and indigenous people**

UiT has the ambition to be at the international forefront when it comes to knowledge and competence about and for the Arctic and the High North. To achieve this the university will "Strengthen competence about and for Sami and Kven conditions." Hence, our university wants to be the leading university when it comes to knowledge about and dissemination of

Sami and Kven language, culture, art and society, and about encounters between majority and minority communities.

Due to our location in the Arctic, we have a special focus on the welfare, equality and societal participation of our national indigenous people and minority groups like Sami and Kvens. An important part of our research, performed by ASVF, has been focusing on different aspects of the situation of immigrants and refugees.

Further our research aims to understand how cultural and linguistically barriers are an obstacle to participation, how cultural experiences might establish a background to how people in vulnerable positions and/ or with a functional impairment understand their life situation, and the meaning of culture understanding and cultural sensibility when welfare services are formed and provided to these groups. The department also has a specific task to provide social educators for the changing needs amongst both migrants, Samis and Kvens in the northern-Norwegian regions, providing a sufficiently broad education based on research of relevance.

We kindly ask the committee to evaluate how well our research addresses previous and future societal challenges of minorities and indigenous people. We highly welcome suggestions for research directions to further develop our research focus on minorities and indigenous groups, in order to maintain our relevance to the High North, and to strengthen our position for future research funding.

In addition, we would like your report to provide a qualitative assessment of the Department of Social Education as a whole in relation to its strategic targets. The committee assesses the strategy that the administrative unit intends to pursue in the years ahead and the extent to which it will be capable of meeting its targets for research and society during this period based on available resources and competence. The committee is also invited to make recommendations concerning these two subjects.

## **Documentation**

The necessary documentation will be made available by the life sciences secretariat at Technopolis Group.

The documents will include the following:

- a report on research personnel and publications within life sciences commissioned by RCN
- a self-assessment based on a template provided by the life sciences secretariat

## **Interviews with representatives from the evaluated units**

Interviews with the Department of Social Education will be organised by the evaluation secretariat. Such interviews can be organised as a site visit, in another specified location in Norway or as a video conference.

## **Statement on impartiality and confidence**

The assessment should be carried out in accordance with the *Regulations on Impartiality and Confidence in the Research Council of Norway*. A statement on the impartiality of the committee members has been recorded by the RCN as a part of the appointment process. The impartiality and confidence of committee and panel members should be confirmed when evaluation data from the Department of Social Education are made available to the committee and the panels, and before any assessments are made based on these data. The RCN should be notified if questions concerning impartiality and confidence are raised by committee members during the evaluation process.

## **Assessment report**

We ask you to report your findings in an assessment report drawn up in accordance with a format specified by the life sciences secretariat. The committee may suggest adjustments to this format at its first meeting. A draft report should be sent to the Department of Social Education and RCN. The Department of Social Education should be allowed to check the report for factual inaccuracies; if such inaccuracies are found, they should be reported to the life sciences secretariat within the deadline given by the secretariat. After the committee has made the amendments judged necessary, a corrected version of the assessment report should be sent to the board of the Faculty of Health Sciences, UiT the Arctic University of Norway and the RCN after all feedback on inaccuracies has been received from Department of Social Education.