



UNIVERSITY  
OF OSLO

# Strategic Plan for the University of Oslo 2005-2009



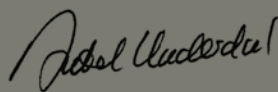
## Foreword

From time to time we should step back from the whirlwind of daily activity, reflect together on the challenges facing us, and unite around a strategy for meeting these challenges. This document is the outcome of such a process, in which many people have participated along the way. The University Board unanimously approved the strategic plan on 14 June 2005.

UiO can largely shape its own future – this is the assumption upon which the strategic plan process has been based. Although the university faces considerable challenges, it also has substantial freedom to act. In the period 2005 – 2010, roughly 450 current employees of UiO will retire. This fact alone means that during a five-year period UiO will likely hire as many new employees as the university colleges in Lillehammer and Buskerud currently have altogether.

This strategic plan has been developed to serve as a tool that can help the university to gain a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities available to it – to make the most of its freedom when carrying out the goal-oriented, long-term efforts to further develop UiO as a haven for academic freedom and a dynamic knowledge centre.

The Strategic Plan 2005 – 2009 has been written from a position of self-confidence as well as humility. At UiO we are secure in our foundation that is based on the fundamental values of the university tradition. We are proud of our nearly 200-year long history, and we believe in our own strengths. But we also recognise that society is rightfully placing greater demands on us, that we are facing more intense competition at home and abroad, and that the university can fulfil its role only by being an open, learning-oriented organisation, actively involved in meeting society's challenges and needs.



Arild Underdal  
*Rector*

# Identity and academic profile

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## **Institutional identity**

The University of Oslo aims to be a haven for academic freedom and a dynamic knowledge centre. As a *haven for academic freedom*, UiO should recognise and promote curiosity as a vital, legitimate driving force underlying research and education, and it should offer researchers and students good opportunities to challenge established notions and try out new ideas and arguments. The foundation of this haven is academic independence – not only for the university as an institution, but first and foremost for the individual. The university protects this freedom from both internal and external pressures. All academic management should be exercised with respect for the freedom of individual researchers to choose their own research questions and methods and to publish their own findings. To support academic freedom, it is imperative that the working environment be based on equality, respect and openness. The university is committed to counteracting all forms of direct and indirect discrimination, pursuing equality as a conscious component of all its activities, and working for equal access to education. As a *dynamic knowledge centre*, UiO should generate new knowledge, provide important impulses for other activities, and develop the ability of individuals and society at large to pose productive questions and obtain valid answers.

In order to succeed, the university must be committed to academic freedom. But it must also place high demands on itself, pursue quality, allocate sufficient resources, foster a collegial community, and be able to unite its forces to implement large-scale efforts. It must be an open, learning-oriented organisation, actively involved in meeting society's challenges and needs, and it must act with great integrity in all its activities. Research and education at the university should pursue truth without regard to special interests, be critical and open to reinvestigation, and show respect for various forms of knowledge.

## **UiO's academic profile**

The University of Oslo aims to be Norway's leading comprehensive university, comprised of nationally prominent and internationally recognised academic communities in medicine and the natural sciences as well as in the humanities and social sciences, with a special focus on long-term basic research. UiO seeks to promote knowledge-based trade and industry and public administration and to actively participate in the cultural and social development of society at large. It aims to combine involvement in city and regional development with attention to national concerns and active participation in international research and educational cooperation. Within this broad framework, UiO will focus its academic activities to a greater degree on the basis of three fundamental premises:

### **1. Quality and comparative advantages**

UiO will set its priorities to make the most of its comparative advantage. UiO will establish clearer, stricter minimum requirements for quality in research, education and dissemination, and it will allocate resources in a more systematic way on the basis of achievements and results.

### **2. Need for knowledge and expertise in society at large**

UiO will prioritise academic fields and tasks in which its contributions are, or will be, essential for meeting the need for a highly educated work force and research-based knowledge in society at large. In general, this calls for a focus on:

- Research and education that lay a broad foundation of knowledge for the activities of society at large – such as a fundamental understanding of human life and culture, and generic technologies that facilitate new applications.
- Research that promotes innovation and problem-solving, and education that meets the distinct needs of working life and/or that has a large, stable number of applicants.
- Knowledge that plays an important role in meeting basic human needs, safeguarding fundamental human rights, securing nature's basis for existence for future generations, and addressing other major global challenges.

### **3. Potential for development and cooperation**

UiO will commit substantial resources to securing its position as a leader in international scientific development, and it will devote special attention to academic fields undergoing particularly rapid development. UiO will prioritise its own efforts so as to make better use of opportunities to cooperate with solid partners on demanding tasks.

On this basis, UiO will conduct a comprehensive review of its academic portfolio in the first two years of the strategic plan period. The objective will be to take advantage of the opportunity to re-order priorities and promote academic innovation arising from the natural retirement that will occur in the next five to ten years. This review should result in:

- Greater visibility and better profiling of main academic areas – broadly defined fields to which UiO already allocates substantial resources – which aim to hold a leading national position in both research and education.
- More clearly defined responsibilities – educational programmes or research areas for which UiO has a long-term responsibility.
- A conscious, restrained use of selected thematic efforts – well-coordinated, time-limited programmes with earmarked resources – to build up research capacity and promote new scientific development.

Overall goal for the period:

UiO will strengthen its position  
as a research university of high  
international standing.



# Main areas of activity



# Research

Main goal:

UiO will strengthen its position as a research university of high international standing.

Operational goal:

In recognised international rankings covering the entire spectrum of academic fields, UiO will achieve a leading position in the Nordic region and be among the 20 best in Europe. UiO's most prominent researchers and researcher groups will be among the best in Europe in their fields.

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To achieve the main goal of research, UiO will:

*F1 Help more researchers, researcher groups and academic communities to achieve an international standard of quality.*

UiO will invest more heavily and more systematically in researchers, researcher groups and academic communities which already have achieved, or have the potential for achieving, such a standard. UiO will draw on advice from international panels of experts and national expert evaluations in its own development efforts and allocate a larger share of research funding on the basis of documented results. Research that does not maintain a satisfactory standard will be assessed with a view to implementing a controlled phase-out or other form of intervention.

*F2 Conduct more proactive recruitment efforts*

UiO will more actively seek out talented researchers and improve measures for recruiting them. Special efforts will be introduced to improve recruitment from groups with significant, unused potential: women, various minority groups, and researchers from abroad at an early stage in their careers. The goals and action plan for gender equality will be incorporated as an important tool in the efforts to strengthen UiO as a research university.

*F3 Obtain more assets for research*

UiO will work to obtain more assets for research, placing special emphasis on solid research which is not included in externally prioritised thematic efforts or does not receive "elite allocations". This must be achieved both through more extensive efforts to attract external funding and through an internal re-ordering of priorities. Faculties and units will set field-specific targets for allocation of internal assets and show how these targets can be reached.

*F4 Secure more uninterrupted time for research*

UiO will make a concerted effort to give active researchers more uninterrupted time to conduct research. This requires better correspondence between job duties and capacity, a more effective organisation of work-related activities – including a new assessment of teaching terms, more flexible differentiation of job duties, and improved coordination of and focus on administrative and technical support services.

*F5 Gain strength through cooperation*

UiO will establish closer, more ambitious cooperation with partners of high scientific merit. Important goals for the near future are to ensure an active role for more researchers and researcher groups in leading international collaborative projects and to further develop cooperation with research institutions and knowledge-based enterprises in the Oslo region.

*F6 Strengthen researcher education*

To solidify and strengthen its position as Norway's leading institution for research education, UiO will continue to develop its doctoral degree programmes, establish research schools grounded in strong academic communities, and make better use of its international networks and cooperating institutions.

*F7 Create greater potential for new scientific development*

UiO aims to be a leader in international scientific development, including when it takes totally new directions. In order to achieve this, the university must promote new, promising initiatives, provide energy through active research leadership, ensure sufficient flexibility in the internal organisation, and allocate seed funds to assist researchers, projects and programmes with particularly interesting, but uncertain, potential.

# Education

Main goal:

UiO will offer an education that provides graduates with academic competence of a high European standard and gives students a solid foundation for their further development – as professionals in their fields and as members of society.

Operational goal:

Employers and educational institutions in Norway and abroad will recognise a degree from UiO as documentation of academic competence of the standard expected from a leading European university.

U

To reach the main goal of education, UiO will:

*U1 Give a central role to learning outcomes and the competency of graduates*

UiO will clarify the goals for its study programmes and ensure that these actually guide teaching and testing. In general, UiO will organise its educational activities so that they:

- Provide broad academic competence for professions requiring a high level of knowledge.
- Lay a solid foundation for further learning and development.
- Develop the individual's ability to transfer knowledge and insight into problem-solving.
- Develop the ability of individuals and society at large to pose new, productive questions, critically challenge conventional wisdom, and distinguish between what is true or tenable from what is false or not tenable based on scientific testing.
- Develop the individual's sense of responsibility, ethical judgment and professional integrity.

*U2 Continue efforts to create a better learning environment*

A good learning environment is necessary for achieving a good learning outcome. The Quality Reform to achieve a better learning environment will be continued – with universal design as the norm and Student Life as a cooperating partner. Faculties and units will set field-specific goals for the educational component and other academic follow-up, and as a general rule prioritise academic and pedagogical quality over a broad course selection. A focus on flexible learning and enhancing pedagogical competence will be continued. UiO will facilitate and support student volunteerism and follow-up former students through an alumni programme.

*U3 Provide research-based education*

All education at UiO will disseminate updated, research-based knowledge, use active researchers in key teaching roles, and help students to develop an understanding of scientific modes of thought – through close contact with active researchers to the extent possible. All bachelor degree programmes will lay the foundation for higher-level studies. UiO will permit the implementation of trial schemes that create two tracks in the last part of certain master's level and professional studies – one emphasizing preparation for further researcher education and another focusing on education for professions that require a high level of knowledge and analytical competence in applied fields.

*U4 Make international exposure an integrated part of the study programmes*

UiO will expand opportunities for its own students to carry out a portion of their studies abroad and for international students to take part of their studies at UiO, and it will encourage more students to take advantage of this opportunity. UiO will establish several joint study programmes with good universities abroad.

*U5 Further develop the educational component through dialogue and cooperation*

UiO will more actively and systematically compile and utilise ideas and input from outside the university – from working life, alumni and other educational institutions recognised for their high quality of education. UiO will provide students with more knowledge about, and contact with the professional sectors for which they are being educated. Such efforts will include expanding contact with knowledge-intensive enterprises and supporting the efforts of the Career Centre.



*U6 Continually test oneself in relation to one's own goals and ambitions*

Governing bodies and leadership at all levels will be actively involved in quality assurance and quality development. During 2005 UiO will launch a suitable, user-friendly system for measuring and reporting, and implement more systematic, dynamic measures to follow-up important results. The threshold will be lowered for taking action to address deficiencies in quality.

*U7 Recruit talented, motivated students*

The main goal of UiO's recruitment efforts is to attract talented, motivated students to its study programmes. Special efforts will be made to attract:

- More students from minority groups that are underrepresented in the study programmes.
- More students in core mathematics and natural science subjects with a small number of applicants.
- More international students in regular study programmes.

*U8 Expand the course offering in continuing and further education*

In the near future first priority will be given to ongoing development of the basic study programmes, but UiO also has high, long-term ambitions for its course offering in continuing and further education. During 2006 a framework and guidelines will be developed, and a comprehensive action plan will be prepared with a focus on effective use of the university's own academic competence and existing study programmes, and on adults' needs for flexibility in the programmes. Cooperation with working life will be strengthened, and inspiration from job-related continuing and further education will be put to use when developing regular study programmes and courses.

# Knowledge *in use*

## Main goal:

UiO will actively promote the use of research-based knowledge in society and provide the public at large with insight into scientific thought and updated information on research findings.

## Operational goal:

UiO will be recognised as Norway's leading, most extensive "knowledge bank" and attain more and better concrete results as a cooperating partner in innovation and development efforts.

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To achieve the main goal of knowledge in use, UiO will:

*K1 Promote high quality, effective dissemination of research-based knowledge to the public at large*

UiO will more systematically support outstanding efforts to disseminate research-based knowledge by:

- Assuming greater institutional responsibility for dissemination efforts, including developing the university's own programmes in this area and earmarking funds for selected dissemination activities that maintain a high scientific and pedagogical standard.
- Offering courses and advising to employees who wish to raise their level of proficiency in knowledge dissemination or to contribute in other ways to an informed public debate.
- Considering the introduction of a model for results-based or project-based allocation of funds for knowledge dissemination.

*K2 Promote more effective use of research-based knowledge in innovation and development efforts*

One major task will be to further develop Birkeland Innovation in its role as a link between UiO's academic communities and technology companies, other knowledge-intensive enterprises and investors. UiO will push for better coordination of its own support structure and its own measures with those measures taken by the university hospitals and other research institutions. UiO will continue to develop its own educational programmes in entrepreneurship and make better use of the expertise of its cooperating partners in other study programmes and in its own research activities.

*K3 Improve access to UiO's knowledge sources*

"Long-distance access" to UiO's collections and publications will be further improved by digitalising publications and collections and by adapting electronic services. The collections and expertise at the museums and libraries will be put to better use in other dissemination and outreach activities.

*K4 Continue to develop cooperation with the school system*

Pupils and teachers will be important target groups for UiO's dissemination efforts. Current activities will be expanded, and more units will be included.

*K5 Take a more cohesive approach to UiO's contact with society at large*

Efforts to strengthen UiO's contact and cooperation with society at large – locally as well as nationally – will involve the university leadership and administration to a greater degree and be coordinated through a separate action plan.



# Resources

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# Employees

Main goal:

UiO will seek out and nurture employees who possess a combination of expertise, commitment, independence and sense of responsibility. As a workplace, UiO will be distinguished by equality, respect, participation and co-determination.



To achieve the main goal related to employees, UiO will:

*M1 Combine high standards with good support and opportunities for professional development*

As an employer, UiO will set high standards for competence, efforts and results, while ensuring that the individual employee receives good academic and collegial support and opportunities for professional development. This will require:

- Closer follow-up of individual employees, including regular, one-on-one meetings between leaders and employees.
- Active use of opportunities to customise job duties to the individual employee based on the university's needs and on the employee's abilities and personal circumstances. The university's responsibility to be an inclusive workplace will be followed up.
- Systematic training of managers and better opportunities for professional development for employees.
- Expanded opportunities for mid-level positions and more flexibility for employees to pursue alternative career paths. The possibility of introducing a tenure-track system will be explored.

*M2 Ensure renewal of expertise*

During the next ten years, one-third of UiO's academic personnel will retire. Long-term, cohesive planning is therefore necessary to recruit talented researchers and to coordinate UiO's total pool of expertise with institutional priorities and the future needs of society. Wage and personnel policy must be designed to support these objectives.

*M3 Continue to develop UiO as a workplace distinguished by equality, respect, commitment and participation.*

UiO is committed to counteracting all forms of discrimination. UiO's goals and action plan for gender equality will

be followed up at all levels and be supplemented by measures to oppose all forms of biased, differential treatment. Regulations, incentive systems and other schemes will be designed to give all qualified employees and students equal opportunity to develop their talents. Hiring new employees will contribute to greater diversity. The leadership in all units will strive to create a good community of employees that includes all employee groups and that helps UiO to achieve its goals for improved health, safety and the environment.

*M4 Create productive forums for discussion of important issues*

As a supplement to collegial bodies, UiO will continue to develop more direct and inclusive forms of participation at the university – from local joint seminars organised as thematically focused brainstorming sessions to open, web-based discussion forums. The formal cooperation between UiO and civil servant organisations will ensure direct communication between employee representatives and the leadership at the appropriate level of management.

# Organisation

Main goal:

UiO will be an organisation committed to self-development and pursuit of its goals, actively seeking out inspiration from society, utilising ideas and input from employees and students, and setting priorities to achieve its academic goals.



To achieve the main organisational goal, UiO will:

*O1 Develop more cohesive governance with clearer priorities*

At all organisational levels, the governing bodies will focus more clearly on overall goals, strategies and priorities, as well as supervise and assure the quality of ongoing activities. A good basis for decision-making, relevant reporting and better tools for focusing on and following up established goals and results will help the governing bodies to more effectively carry out these responsibilities.

*O2 Strengthen academic leadership*

UiO will strengthen its academic leadership, enabling it to serve as a facilitator, stimulus, coordinator, door opener and guardian of independence in research. A high level of academic competence will form the basis of the leadership's authority. The roles of research leader and programme leader will be developed further, especially in relation to projects or programmes based on contributions from several different academic communities and units. Administrative support will be enhanced for tasks such as handling demanding applications and managing large-scale projects and programmes.

*O3 Be an open, learning-oriented organisation*

UiO will strive to be open to review, actively seek out ideas from outside the institution, and use evaluation-based information and quality-assured data as a basis for decision-making. During the strategic plan period, a comprehensive assessment will be conducted of the organisational changes implemented in recent years. The assessment will also draw upon the experiences of institutions that have chosen different solutions.

*O4 Improve interaction between all parts of the organisation*

UiO will emphasise work methods that stimulate contact

and cohesiveness throughout the organisation and enhance the ability to utilise the expertise found in the various environments, units and levels. Leadership groups, large-scale leadership forums and other measures will be used systematically to ensure good coordination and to trigger the synergistic potential arising from institutional diversity.

*O5 Enhance the organisation's efficiency and ability to achieve defined goals*

UiO's leadership and administration will be distinguished by a high level of expertise, effective work routines, and the ability and willingness to promote the institution's common goals and ambitions. This will require UiO to:

- Clarify the areas of responsibility, authority and duties between the governing bodies, between managers/leaders and between units.
- Reduce the number of levels involved in decision-making through measures such as increased delegation.
- Ensure competence development in critical areas and during demanding restructuring processes.
- Rationalise work routines, for example, through the use of modern IT-based systems and by centralising tasks to benefit from economies of scale.

*O6 Enhance the organisation's ability to stimulate initiative and creativity*

UiO will adopt a broader range of measures to overcome organisational obstacles to new development. These may include external evaluation of the synergistic potential in selected academic areas, job sharing, and seed funds for cooperative efforts initiated by researchers. UiO will establish forums in which academic and technical/administrative employees can work together to develop activities across academic fields and units, including students in this process as well.

# Finances

Main goal:

UiO will have the economic foundation necessary for achieving its academic goals and use the funds at its disposal in an efficient, goal-oriented manner.



To achieve the main financial goal, UiO will:

*Ø1 Make efforts to strengthen the connection between goals/tasks and allocations*

If Norway is to have one or more universities of the highest European standard, the total amount of Norwegian funding for research must be increased in line with this goal and be arranged so that it promotes quality and provides incentives to conduct ambitious projects. The goals and aims of “Commitment to Research” (Report No. 20 (2004-2005) to the Storting) must be followed up. In order to offer education of a high European standard, the funding must enable educational institutions to give the students high-quality instruction and follow-up, provide access to necessary equipment and teaching resources, and ensure equal access to education. UiO must undertake a significant upgrade and renewal of its buildings to meet society’s heightened demands on working and learning environments, to fulfil its own goals for academic development, and to preserve cultural heritage sites. Future allocations must equip UiO to meet this challenge, and UiO will make a concerted effort to see that these conditions are met.

*Ø2 Attract more external funding for research*

UiO will work intensely to attract more external funding for research. Special efforts will be directed toward sources which have not yet been fully exploited, such as certain segments of the Research Council of Norway, the EU and international foundations.

*Ø3 Manage the university’s own resources in an efficient, goal-oriented manner*

UiO will improve its own financial control and financial management by:

- Developing mechanisms for internal resource allocation that ensure better coordination between academic priorities and tasks on the one hand and allocated resources on the other.
- Establishing models and routines for budgeting of operations which ensure that all consequential costs (work hours, assets, buildings, IT, etc.) are taken into account in the decision-making process.
- Combining multi-year planning with flexibility that allows for new academic development.

# Infrastructure

Main goal:

UiO's infrastructure will maintain a standard that supports the high academic goals for research, education and dissemination and that ensures the employees and students a good, well-functioning working environment which fosters a sense of

satisfaction, holds a high aesthetic standard, and meets modern requirements for health, safety and the environment.

To achieve the main goal for infrastructure, UiO will:

*11 Ensure sound management of its own buildings*

UiO will ensure that its own buildings are well-maintained and – with funds from the generally approved budget – implement selected upgrades that are particularly important to a good working and learning environment or to academic and organisational reform processes. UiO will also work to secure adequate funding to support sustainable management of all buildings owned by the state in the university and university college sector.

*12 Implement selected upgrading projects and new construction*

During the strategic plan period, UiO will begin using the new informatics building (IFI II), the Domus Medica annex, and the second construction phase of Forskningsveien 3. UiO also plans to upgrade the pre-dentistry building and improve the magazine collections at the museums. Measures to improve the facilities for dentistry will be implemented. UiO will continue its efforts to obtain a clear signal from the authorities to begin construction of the following three large buildings in the future:

- Research centre in Gaustadbekkdalen, with new premises and modern research facilities for chemistry and possibly for new, future-oriented combinations of chemistry and other fields.
- The cultural history museum at the Medieval Town in Oslo.
- A new greenhouse at Tøyen, financed in part by private investors.

*13 Formulate a plan for space allocation*

To ensure the rational use and development of UiO's area and buildings, a comprehensive plan will be formulated

for future allocations of space. One important objective is to reduce the leasing volume by conducting more activities on university premises.

*14 Continually renew scientific equipment and capitalise on its potential*

UiO has a great need to renew and upgrade its scientific equipment and will therefore work to ensure the continuation of the national programme for upgrading scientific equipment administered by the Research Council of Norway. Greater emphasis will be placed on the rational use of equipment through internal coordination and cooperation with other institutions on large-scale, costly equipment. The priorities set by the faculties and the actual amount granted by the Research Council for funding of equipment acquisitions will continue to serve as a basis for the university's central priorities.

*15 Ensure an appropriate, user-efficient IT service*

Infrastructure and IT services will maintain a good international standard and focus on development and support of the university's main activities. This requires good interaction between the Centre for Information Technology and other units at UiO, training in the use of IT as a tool for use in academic and administrative activities, and a willingness to change and develop work routines and organisational systems to reap the benefits of new IT solutions.

*16 Develop better security for scientific collections*

UiO will make good progress in efforts to improve the security of the scientific collections at the museums. It will also improve access to the collections and opportunities to use them by digitalising the collections and by developing and enhancing the effectiveness of services for the public. Efforts to digitalise museum collections will be completed in the course of the strategic plan period.



*17 Ensure good access to scientific literature and digital databases*

Good access to new scientific literature and digital databases is imperative if UiO is to achieve its academic goals. Sufficient funds must be earmarked to ensure that access to literature and databases maintains a satisfactory international standard. Measures to make library services more efficient, such as through the use of modern technology, must be continued, and the efforts to clarify and define the services in relation to external partners will be completed.

*18 Continue systematic efforts related to health, safety and the environment*

Through systematic efforts related to health, safety and the environment, UiO will ensure that employees and students have satisfactory facilities in which to work and that local routines for safety and emergency preparedness are followed up. Norwegian national policy on working environment will form the basis of UiO's activities in this area.





The sculpture entitled Brudt form ("Broken shape") by Aase Texmon Rygh will be an engaging new visual centrepiece on the university campus at Blindern. The sculpture is on permanent loan from Oslo's municipal art collection. As of September 2005 the sculpture will be displayed in front of Niels Treschows hus.