



# Inspiring Excellence- The Norwegian Way

Centres for Excellence in Education (SFU)

**Excellence as inclusive and developmental**

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- 1. The SFU initiative and results so far**
- 2. Excellence – the Norwegian way:  
exclusive and inclusive**

# National prestige initiative



- Lift the status of teaching and learning
- Stimulate excellence in education (BA + MA)
- Contribute to:
  - knowledge and research led enhancement and innovation
  - stronger interaction between HEIs and society
  - sector-wide development and dissemination of knowledge and practices

- Long-term effort (2010)
- Centres : top funding 4- 8 million NOK annually
- Status for 5 + 5 years
- Programme 45 million NOK annually

## Norway

- 5,1 mill inhabitants
- 9 universities (public)
- 41 colleges (public and private)
- 260 000 students
- 37 500 staff

# 8 diverse centres

- 2011 – Pilot- Teacher education
  - ✓ ProTED – University of Oslo and UiT- Arctic University
- 2013 – Open call
  - ✓ Centre for excellence in music performance education (CEMPE) – Norwegian Academy of Music
  - ✓ MatRIC - Centre for Reserach, Innovation and Coordination of Mathematics Teaching-  
– University of Agder
  - ✓ Centre of excellence in Biology education (bioCEED) - University of Bergen,  
University Centre Svalbard and Marine Research Institute
- 2016 – Open call
  - ✓ Center for Computing in Science Education (CCSE) – University of Oslo
  - ✓ Centre for Engaged Education through Entrepreneurship (Engage) - NTNU and Nord University
  - ✓ Centre of Excellence in Computing and IT (Excited) – NTNU and Nord University
  - ✓ Centre of Excellence in Film and Interactive Media Arts (CEFIMA) – Norwegian Film School



**CEMPE**  
Senter for fremragende  
utdanning i musikkutøving

**MatRIC** Centre for Research,  
Innovation and Coordination  
of Mathematics Teaching

**bioCEED**

## Impact of the SFU initiative

- Higher status and priority to teaching and learning (competition)
  - Legitimacy for resources (time and money) for HEIs and individuals
  - Strategies and project anchored in senior management
  
- More awareness around quality, excellence and indicators
  - Arenas to discuss teaching and learning (institutional and national)
  - Common language
  - De-privatising teaching
  - Research on education, SoTL
  - Student engagement – innovation
  
- Collaboration (internally, between HEIs, internationally)



**Excellence: exclusive and inclusive**

## An SFU must

- offer excellent R&D-based education
- develop innovative ways of working with R&D-based education
- encourage student engagement
- contribute to the development and dissemination of knowledge

# Criteria

## 1. Documented **excellence**

- Excel, be pre-eminent, stand out from the rest (Elton 1998)
- Education
- Multi-level and multi-actor effort
- Contextual- adopted to different disciplines / knowledge domains and cultures

## 2. **Innovation**: centre plan for innovation and enhancement

## 3. **Dissemination**: Centres **for** excellence – sustained change

- Disseminate knowledge, good practices and results from the centre nationally and internationally.
- Plans on how to help others improve.



## Centres FOR excellence

- *Dissemination: a two-way process*

*“A key characteristic for a successful SFU is humility: an acceptance that all new ideas do not necessarily originate here, that there are other excellent teachers elsewhere” (Lawson 2016:140)*

*“the planned process of understanding potential adopters and engaging with them throughout the life of the project, to facilitate commitment to sustained change” (Hinton et al, 2011, p.6)*

A blurred background image showing a group of people in a meeting or conference room. They are seated around a table, looking towards a screen or presentation. The image is out of focus, emphasizing the text overlaid on it.

Enhancement  
Cooperation  
Quality culture



	SFU	TEF
<b>Initiated</b>	2010	2016
<b>Voluntary competition</b>	✓	✓
<b>Funding consequences</b>	✓	X (via student fees?)
<b>Obligations</b>	✓ National centres to impact the sector	X
<b>Aims</b>	Reward and recognise teaching - <b>Enhancement</b>	Reward and recognise teaching - <b>Student choice</b>
<b>Key Level</b>	<b>Programme</b> (centre- institutional)	<b>Institutional</b> (subject level TEF)
<b>Metrics</b>	<b>Free of choice</b> <b>Narrative</b>	<b>Core metrics</b> <b>Narrative</b>
<b>Assessment</b>	International expert panel with student representation  - site visits: interviews of senior management, teachers, students, stakeholders and key staff	TEF assessors make initial judgement with conclusion sent to panel that confirms the final judgement
<b>Assessment visits</b>	✓	X
<b>5 year action plan included</b>	✓	X
<b>Evaluation and impact framework</b>	✓	X

# Partnership for development

- **Application phase**
  - Beneficial all applicants: feedback (x2) + seminars
  - All bids and feedback made public – transparency
  - Stimulate cooperation
- **Centres**
  - Follow-up: focus on enhancement- trust - partner
  - Attend board meetings and events
  - Annual reporting seminars- dialogue between centres
  - Mid-term evaluation- developmental focus
  - Network between centres- stimulate sharing good practice, cooperation
  - Incubator for innovation
  - Dialogue meetings every second year (international experts)
- **Dissemination**
  - SFU-magazine
  - Seminars for all HEIs- arenas to discuss education – teachers’ retreats
  - Seed money to fund project: students as partners, SoTL projects students and staff
  - Evaluations, research projects





# Excellence: changed practices

- **Exclusive but inclusive**
- **Enhancement**
- **Defined by institutions**
- **Sustained change**

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