



International Students' Union of Norway  
(ISU Norway) presents its inputs to improve  
internationalization of education in Norway

*ISU NORWAY*  
*“KVALITETSMELDING”*  
*INPUTS*

**International Students' Union of Norway**  
**(ISU Norway)**

# ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS



<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1. Importance internationalization of education .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Internationalization of education at home (in Norway) .....</b>	<b>4-12</b>
2.1 Virtual mobility .....	4-6
2.1.1 Virtual mobility importance .....	4
2.1.2 Virtual mobility project at Linnaeus University .....	4-5
2.1.3 Other European projects about virtual mobility.....	5-7
2.2 Full degree program for student from developing countries .....	6
2.3 Refugees' inclusion in academia .....	7-8
2.4 Language inclusion .....	8-12
2.4.1 Language inclusion importance for Norwegian .....	8-9
higher education	
2.4.2 Language policy guidelines for inclusion of international .....	9-12
students in Norway	
2.4.2.1 “Parallel lingualism” .....	9-10
2.4.2.2 Linguistic diversity .....	10
2.4.2.3 Increase level of English proficiency .....	11
in Norwegian higher education institutions	
2.4.2.4 Support to offer more courses and bachelor .....	11
programs in English	
2.4.2.5 Offer Norwegian language courses as .....	11-12
elective courses with ECTS credits	
2.4.2.6 Support social activities and events that .....	12
promote the use of Norwegian language	
2.4.2.7 Norwegian language learning online .....	12

# ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS

Table of Contents	Pages
<b>3. Student Mobility (outside Norway) .....</b>	<b>13-15</b>
3.1 Embassies cooperation .....	13
3.2 Student ambassador /Mentor .....	14-15
3.2.1 Project description .....	14
3.2.2 Student ambassadors/mentors' presentations .....	14-15
3.3 Norwegian government cooperation with student organizations .....	15
<b>4. Social Inclusion of international students in Norway .....</b>	<b>15-17</b>
4.1 Mental health .....	15
4.2 ISU Norway Icebreaker campaign in October .....	16-17
4.2.1 Focus of the campaign .....	16
4.2.2 Budget .....	17
<b>5. Social Inclusion .....</b>	<b>17-19</b>
5.1 Inclusion in the student community .....	17-19
5.1.1 Support participation in student organizations .....	17
5.1.2 Support social events, as a way to help .....	18
students' inclusion	
5.1.3 Provide a start guide to communicate for .....	18
international students	
5.1.4 Information about regulations for international students .....	18-19
5.2 Inclusion in the local community and cultural knowledge .....	19

## ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS

### 1. Importance internationalization of education

Internationalization of higher education has a focus to increase cooperation between several members, and enable students qualified to work and conduct a research in an international academic and labor arena. Thus, international students are global innovators with global connections, because they can help Norway to become a future leader in research, innovation and the application of new technologies. Moreover, internationalization of higher education in Norway is becoming more important and prevalent within the education policy. That is for instance, the case from the United Nations that in its strategy to promote “*sustainable development goals*”. The United Nations, recognize the value to work towards ensuring an inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning, that will benefit the whole society<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations «sustainable development goals» Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

# ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS

## 2. Internationalization of education at home (in Norway)

### 2.1 Virtual mobility

#### 2.1.1 Virtual mobility importance

Virtual mobility is the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to obtain the same benefits as one would have with physical mobility, but without the need to travel<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, e-learning specialist Alastair Creelman (from Linnaeus University in Sweden) as the author of the present chapter about virtual mobility, focus to develop the concept into an opportunity for students to take courses from universities abroad without travelling. E-learning specialist Alastair Creelman’s project provides an excellent opportunity for students that can’t go abroad due to different reasons (personal, financial, etc.), to take those courses they want at home with ECTS credits.

Creelman emphasize that the main aim of the project is to raise awareness of virtual mobility opportunities and start some pilot projects. The main inspiration lies outside Scandinavia in countries like Lithuania, where he will be going on a study trip in March 2017. More information about a webinar<sup>3</sup> to explain virtual mobility, was presented by e-learning specialist Creelman and two other experts from Vytautas Magnus University in September 2016.

#### 2.1.2 Virtual mobility project at Linnaeus University

A good example of virtual mobility is the case mentioned from e-learning specialist Creelman at Linnaeus University in Sweden. The project<sup>4</sup> is internal, and has not developed a public website but the internal information is accessible to everyone.

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<sup>2</sup> Virtual Mobility (2006): <http://www.eurashe.eu/library/modernising-phe/mobility/virtual/WG4%20R%20Virtual%20Mobility%20Best%20Practice%20Manual.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Webinar about virtual mobility (2016): <http://ny.ithu.se/webinar-virtual-mobility-2909/>

<sup>4</sup> Virtual mobility Project at Linnaeus University in Sweden: <https://medarbetare.lnu.se/en/medarbetare/current-projects/project-global-classroom/?l=en>

## ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS

They work primarily with program managers and encourage them to review their programs’ level of internationalization using Linnaeus University self-assessment grid<sup>5</sup>. This self-assessment is now being developed into a digital tool. Linnaeus University has started to work in this field, and is unique from similar initiatives in Sweden. Creelman presented at the Swedish internationalization conference in Stockholm in November, and got the same impression as at SiU International Conference<sup>6</sup> held in Stavanger in March 2016, that mobility is still seen as only about physical movement. Linnaeus University has identified Vytautas Magnus University in Lithuania as a pioneer in the field and they have been involved in most of the European initiatives so far.

### 2.1.3 Other European projects about virtual mobility

Internationally there have been a number of major European Union (EU) projects in Virtual mobility VM over recent years, notably:

- VMColab <http://vmcolab.eu/>
- UbiCamp <http://www.ubicamp.eu/>
- ProVIP <http://www.provip.info/pv/front-page/>

The most interesting project however has been OUVVM (Opening universities for virtual mobility), that launched the concept of a virtual Erasmus<sup>7</sup>. This project is now completed, but a follow-on initiative called ReOpen<sup>8</sup> has just started focusing on recognition of non-formal open learning.

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<sup>5</sup> Linnaeus University assessment for virtual mobility projects: <https://medarbetare.lnu.se/en/medarbetare/current-projects/project-global-classroom/global-classroom-self-analysis-grid/>

<sup>6</sup> SiU International Conference in Stavanger (2016): <https://www.uis.no/samfunn-og-naeringsliv/konferanser/internasjonalsiseringskonferansen-2016/>

<sup>7</sup> Virtual Erasmus concept: <http://www.openstudies.eu/>

<sup>8</sup> ReOpen project: <http://reopen.eu/>

## ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS

Also interesting to consider about virtual mobility:

- Virtual mobility guide from EADTU<sup>9</sup>
- Virtual mobility: an alternative or complement to physical mobility?<sup>10</sup>
- TU Delft is an example of a university with a clear strategy for VM, see their virtual mobility fund<sup>11</sup>

### **2.2 Full degree program for student from developing countries**

A full degree program for students from developing countries, will provide an opportunity to internationalize Norwegian higher education. This will be done giving an opportunity for students' that don't have the opportunity at their home countries to study due to their finances, to come to Norway. Consequently, Norway has the opportunity to share the values and quality of its education with those students, while supporting international solidarity.

ISU Norway considers that a program that will give an opportunity for 100-200 students on a 2 years' period evaluation to study in Norway on a full degree program, will provide a very valuable knowledge for those students. In addition to the increase of knowledge, the program will increase Norwegian cooperation with the rest of the world on education and internationalization of their study programs and education.

Ultimately, ISU Norway believe that this program will contribute to a continual internationalization of education in Norway, with a well-represented international student body.

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<sup>9</sup> EADTU virtual mobility: <http://eadtu.eu/home/policy-areas/virtual-mobility/about>

<sup>10</sup> Virtual mobility an alternative to physical mobility: [http://i2agora.odl.uni-miskolc.hu/i2agora\\_home/data/P3\\_D6\\_ERACON\\_Virtual%20mobility\\_paper.pdf](http://i2agora.odl.uni-miskolc.hu/i2agora_home/data/P3_D6_ERACON_Virtual%20mobility_paper.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> TU Delft mobility fund: <http://studenten.tudelft.nl/en/students/study-and-career/studying-or-doing-an-internship-abroad/step-2-making-preparations/scholarships/beursbeschrijvingen/virtual-mobility-fund/>

## ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS

### 2.3 Refugees’ inclusion in academia

Europe is facing an influx of asylum seekers arriving from different parts of the world. Norway itself has taken in thousands of refugees despite its small population. The country has properly welcomed these refugees through a volunteer community effort, and ISU Norway believes that a positive inclusion of refugees’ in academia will help to improve internationalization of education, with the inclusion of their experience in higher education in their home countries.

ISU Norway suggests a refugees’ in academia with the the following actions:

- Work at a national level to ensure that refugees going into academia are given the same rights as all international students.
- Work at a local level to provide an inclusive environment where the welfare of the refugee students is properly taken into consideration.
- Work both nationally and locally to utilize both international and Norwegian students for volunteer services to the different institutions that help refugees.

ISU Norway would like that those proposals being considered, as well promoting “*Akademisk Dugnad*” initiative at Norwegian higher education institutions, and NOKUT’s refugees’ qualification passport as a tool to help recognize refugees’ studies in Norway.

“*Academic Dugnad*”<sup>12</sup> is the collected efforts for refugees and asylum seekers of the University of Oslo, and other universities and university colleges in Norway. The main focus has been refugees who had begun or finished their degrees before arriving in Norway, to make it easier for them to continue their studies or find relevant work. Initiatives includes internship arrangements, networking groups, language training opportunities and open lectures.

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<sup>12</sup> Akademisk Dugnad: [www.uio.no/academic-dugnad](http://www.uio.no/academic-dugnad)

## **ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS**

On the other hand, NOKUT<sup>13</sup> offer various recognition tools for refugees, as well as the initiative for a European Qualifications Passport and other European projects.

### **2.4 Language inclusion**

#### **2.4.1 Language inclusion importance for Norwegian higher education**

With globalization of higher education, there comes an increased focus on language policy development in Norway's higher education sector. Those needs are for English and other foreign languages, to enable participation in international student exchange, research cooperation and publishing.

Therefore, the Norwegian language has been and continues to be important for the different colleges' and universities' internationalization strategies, as a national center of expertise within their educational disciplines. However, the different colleges and universities in Norway should work to make language policy not only to accommodate the antagonism between Norwegian and English usage, but also take into consideration that language diversity de facto is much greater and a way to help communicate with the international study community.

Furthermore, ISU Norway recognizes the importance of language inclusion as a way to help on International students' integration during their period of studies in Norway, and also as a way to help for a possible stay in Norway after they finish their studies. Thus, language inclusion is also important because it helps to have a better understood of Norwegian society and its particularities, so the gap upon arrival for international students and the subsequent relation with Norwegian students can be easily solved.

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<sup>13</sup> Nokut Refugees Qualification Passport: <http://www.nokut.no/en/Facts-and-statistics/Publications/Research-and-analyses/Foreign-education/NOKUTs-Qualifications-Passport-for-Refugees/>

## **ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS**

To close, all students in Norway should expect a satisfactory student life in an inclusive environment during their study time in Norway including a language learning of other languages, besides improving English knowledge.

### **2.4.2 Language policy guidelines for inclusion of international students in Norway**

#### **2.4.2.1 “Parallel lingualism”**

Norwegian is the main language at the different Colleges and Universities. The main principle for developing linguistic diversity at the different Colleges and Universities is *“Parallel lingualism”*. *“Parallel lingualism”* is the form of bilingualism that systematically gives equal status to Norwegian and a/several foreign language/s in academic work, that in the case at the different Colleges and Universities is English. However, an increase on more courses and/or Bachelor programs in English will help to increase language inclusion and offer to all students an opportunity to be more used on using English as a language on further research or career development, helping to improve internationalization of education. Another aspect of *“Parallel lingualism”* is to ensure that all videos used in teaching have subtitles both in Norwegian and English, as far as possible. If the teacher speaks Norwegian then subtitles in Norwegian will help foreign students to learn the language, and provide valuable reinforcement when they can’t really hear what the teacher is saying. Subtitles are also an important inclusion measure – help for people with hearing difficulties etc.

To promote the principle of *“Parallel Lingualism”* as a common use of Norwegian and English in the student daily basis, all the different Colleges and Universities publications should include an extensive summary in English, i.e., Norwegian publications should have an English summary and vice versa. English publications written by students and researchers who do not have Norwegian as their native language should have a summary in English as well as in Norwegian.

Furthermore, all important information at the different Colleges and Universities (printed and online information, signs, etc) intended for potential/current students and employees shall be available in Norwegian and English.

## ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS

To close, ISU Norway would like that “*kvalitetsmelding*” will include as the main objectives to promote a positive language inclusion in Norway to benefit internationalization of education the following concepts:

- 1) Contribute to raise awareness regarding English language use at different Colleges and Universities in Norway
- 2) Help international student’s integration and break language barriers, and difficulties to communicate for those who don’t speak Norwegian and encourage them to learn the language

### 2.4.2.2 Linguistic diversity

E-learning specialist Alastair Creelman from Linnaeus University, presents a newly completed project called LangOER<sup>14</sup> that looks at how lesser used and minority languages, can be strengthened by working with open educational resources in line with the EU commission’s Opening up education initiative (2013)<sup>15</sup>.

An interesting concept to discuss how to improve linguistic diversity, is “*translanguaging*”<sup>16</sup> that promotes the use of different languages in the classroom (physical or digital). This makes students aware of other languages, while empower them to become translators and help others to understand texts in other languages. The improving accuracy of automatic translation tools make online “*translanguaging*” easier.

Social media as Facebook is full of different languages, some of them we don’t understand at all. However, the translation button enables people to get the main idea of the post and then comment in the language each one prefers. Therefore, becomes very important to help students prepare for a multilingual world, and get used to not understanding everything and asking for help.

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<sup>14</sup> LangOER project: <http://langoer.eun.org/>, [http://langoer.eun.org/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=9ee9605a-cb3b-4b35-978f-2ee2dfefe97c&groupId=395028](http://langoer.eun.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=9ee9605a-cb3b-4b35-978f-2ee2dfefe97c&groupId=395028) and <http://langoer.eun.org/resources#2>

<sup>15</sup> EU commission’s Opening up education initiative: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-859\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-859_en.htm)

<sup>16</sup> Translanguaging concept: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/life-bilingual/201603/what-is-translanguaging>)

## **ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS**

### **2.4.2.3 Increase level of English proficiency in Norwegian higher education institutions**

The different Colleges and Universities employees and students are to be encouraged to achieve a high level of proficiency in English in order to be able to communicate with international students doesn't speak Norwegian, while at the same time maintaining Norwegian as the university's main language. Also should be promoted the opportunity for the Norwegian higher education institutions to offer TOEFL official exams at their places, in order to help students might need to take those exams to study abroad.

### **2.4.2.4 Support to offer more courses and bachelor programs in English**

At first-degree level (bachelor), teaching shall primarily be conducted in Norwegian, however there should be an increase in the offer of more courses and full programs in English. The different Norwegian higher education institutions should be contacted to discuss more courses and bachelor programs in English at their institutions.

### **2.4.2.5 Offer Norwegian language courses as elective courses with ECTS credits**

A more diverse language inclusion will help to the integration of international students, and Norwegian students can benefit by a more diverse class, because is believed that in order to help with the integration of international students at the different Colleges and Universities, a proper level of Norwegian is acquired.

In order to fulfill this goal, the different Colleges and Universities should increase the offer to all international students' courses in Norwegian, regardless of what they are studying, with the objective that at the end of their second studies (most of the masters offered to international students has a duration of two years) a level B2 in Norwegian can be acquired, and that is the level required at most of the jobs in Norway.

## **ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS**

The courses in Norwegian must follow the following levels at the end of each semester:

- First year Autumn semester: level A1 acquired
- First year Spring semester: level A2 acquired
- Second year Autumn semester: level B1 acquired
- Second year Spring semester: level B2 acquired

It is essential that all information from the different Colleges and Universities, Housing accommodation organization and the Student Parliament should be both in Norwegian and in English. Especially urgent is the information about the services provided by the student health service, in case of need by the international students.

### **2.4.2.6 Support social activities and events that promote the use of Norwegian language**

Increase ways to communicate in Norwegian as Buddy Program (Norwegian students are matched and help with integration to International Students), Tandem languages (Norwegian-French, Norwegian-Spanish, etc.) and conversation groups run by different organizations such as the Red Cross.

### **2.4.2.7 Norwegian language learning online**

Offer a document where International Students can study Norwegian online according to their level of Norwegian, connecting different websites and places. That document must include places on internet that offer free courses, exercises, etc. in Norwegian according to each level and support their learning of Norwegian to improve their inclusion in the Norwegian society and where international students will be able to show all their experience when they will improve their communication skills in Norwegian, benefiting internationalization of education.

To close, offering Norwegian language courses with ECTS credits as elective courses (evaluating if possible as MOOCs with several universities responsible for course design and support), will help and motivate international students to learn Norwegian while they study in Norway.

## **ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS**

### **3. Student Mobility (outside Norway)**

#### **3.1 Embassies' cooperation**

ISU has started a new initiative creating partnerships with embassies across Norway. Already we have met with more than 30 different embassies and started partnerships with the embassies of Mexico, Switzerland, Israel, Brazil, Portugal, Spain and Morocco. The objective of the partnership project started last year is to connect students with their embassies and the services the embassies provide. Moreover, this year ISU Norway wants to expand the number of Embassies included, as a strategy to support better the new projects from the Ministry of Education Panorama and Norpart.

Those two projects emphasize the bilateral agreements, and several embassies have asked us further cooperation to inform their students about the educational opportunities those programs offer, besides being a connection between the embassies and their national students. In addition to expand the number of embassies included, ISU Norway wants the embassies partnership project focus on the quality to internationalize education in Norway, increase internship opportunities to strengthen the outcomes of education in Norway.

ISU Norway would like the Ministry of Education and Research to support the project, since it provides a good opportunity to inform students about the different opportunities to study abroad. Moreover, the cooperation project gives opportunities to socialize for Norwegian students travelling abroad with the embassies and international students in Norway that can help providing more practical information to the students.

## **ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS**

### **3.2 Student ambassador /Mentor**

#### **3.2.1 Project description**

Norwegian students that had a study experience abroad, and international students coming to Norway, can help to explain better the study and social environment in other countries much better than any official institution. Those students, have the opportunity to explain to potential students in Norway who want to learn more about their studies abroad, much better and with primary information.

Those students will help to encourage students in Norway to travel abroad much more effective than anyone else, because they will use their own networks to communicate directly with the students, and provide personal information very relevant when considering moving abroad.

Those students could be considered as “student ambassadors” or mentors, and when they come back from study abroad (Norwegian students) or coming to Norway (international students), have a session to present the study experience in other countries. Moreover, those students would be very glad to present the positive insights from their experience.

SiU should be encouraged to participate in this initiative, and in cooperation with ISU Norway organize events and activities (including for the “ambassador/mentor” initiative), to inform directly to the students in Norway about the different possibilities to study abroad.

#### **3.2.2 Student ambassadors/mentors’ presentations**

To motivate those students doing those presentations, should be considered:

- 1) Those presentations should be included at the start of every semester
- 2) The students will make the presentations should receive an official certificate from the Ministry of Education and Research, in order to motivate them do the presentations

## **ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS**

- 3) The Ministry of Education and Research should discuss the possibility to invest some funding in paying for the hours the students working those presentations. Another alternative should be that each Norwegian higher education institution provides a small amount to the students interested to make a presentation

### **3.3 Norwegian government cooperation with student organizations**

The cooperation towards taking out the benefits from Norwegian students went abroad, and international students coming to Norway, should focus on a closer cooperation from the Norwegian Government with the student organizations work directly with students had an international background as International Students' Union of Norway (ISU Norway), ANSA, NSO and ESN Norway. A joint meeting with those four student organizations should be organized at least once a semester, to discuss together implementation of policies to support internationalization of education in Norway.

## **4. Social Inclusion of international students in Norway**

### **4.1 Mental health**

Students travelling to a new country can experience loneliness, anxiety, stress and other things that make life a little more difficult to handle. Many have known what it is to move to a new location or the pressure to always perform, school, peer group or at work. All this quickly becomes much more difficult if the student does not know the language, where the culture is new and winter much colder than they are used to in their home countries. It is precisely this situation of international students perceive when they arrive for the first time to Norway.

ISU Norway considers that a survey every year on international students' inclusion in Norway, will help to implement more accurate policies to help their inclusion, and improve internationalization of education in Norway.

## ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS

### 4.2 ISU Norway Icebreaker campaign in October

#### 4.2.1 Focus of the campaign

To work for good inclusion<sup>17</sup> of international students, means to break down barriers that prevent international students from participation in academia and social life. Norwegian and international students should be inspired to make active steps to include and invite each other openly and also be aware of how to make sure they feel included and invite themselves<sup>18</sup>. The language barriers become the biggest barrier in terms of inclusion. For Norwegian and international students to interact they have to find a common language often being English. International students travel to learn language and explore so they are ready to make the effort, however the local students are sticking to their known groups and cultural patterns.

The aim of the Icebreaker campaign is to inspire Norwegian students to make the effort to meet international students in a common language. The campaign had a focus to help international students communicate with Norwegian students, and vice versa. The focus on language as an excuse to improve communication was the main target in the promotional material and videos recorded.

Furthermore, leaders from student organizations as Spire, Changemaker or University representatives as Mari Sundli Tvedt (rector at NMBU) or Morten Irgens (vice-rector at HiOA), recorded some videos to support the campaign<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Icebreaker Facebook page, includes photos and events organized, besides the hashtags #inclusion #icebreaker to follow the campaign

<sup>19</sup> ISU Norway YouTube channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBDfbOw\\_EaWZfZ5VaoVDtGw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBDfbOw_EaWZfZ5VaoVDtGw)

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## **ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS**

### **4.2.2 Budget**

#### Income:

- 160.000 kr from LNU Frifond, kultur.

#### Costs:

- 120.000 kr to making of material – external help.
- 7.500 kr for project coordinator in ISU Norway.
- 20.000 kr for the promotion to all ISU leaders from the 27 Local Branches at ISU Norway kickoff weekend (23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at HiOA)
- 12.500 kr for other administrative cost – f.eks. send the material by post and the accounting.

### **5. Social Inclusion**

A positive social inclusion in the student and Norwegian community, will help to a faster development from international students, and the ability to develop their skills bring from their home countries to benefit internationalization of education in Norway.

#### **5.1 Inclusion in the student community**

##### **5.1.1 Support participation in student organizations**

In all institutions of higher education there are a lot of student organizations. One of the best ways to get to know Norwegian students is to participate in a student organization. In order to introduce international students to the different organizations at the different Colleges and Universities, a Student Organizations day can be organized at least once a semester.

## **ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS**

### **5.1.2 Support social events, as a way to help students’ inclusion**

One inclusion strategy could be to meet a Norwegian tandem partner/buddy. ISU local branch in cooperation with Student Parliament and other student organization at the different Colleges and Universities, can also arrange cafés and social meetings for both Norwegian and international students. Getting to know the Norwegians at the student housing, class or canteen is also a good way to get new friends and a source for interesting information about Norway.

### **5.1.3 Provide a start guide to communicate for international students**

Prepare a starter package that includes information about where students usually hang out in their spare time, a list of student organizations and some basic Norwegian phrases to start a conversation.

### **5.1.4 Information about regulations for international students**

International students’ information about their regulations while study in Norway regarding their working rights and finances are not clear, and in some cases very strict.

An international student from outside the EU/EEA studying in Norway is not entitled to work over 20 hours each week (more on holidays time). The focus to study is clear, but the amount required by those students when renewing their VISA every year with UDI<sup>20</sup> deposit (103950 NOK) is not enough in most of the cases with just 20 hours allowed to work every week. ISU Norway believed that more flexibility on this rule with 5 or 10 hours more allowed to work, will help students finances but also internationalization of education, as they will have less stress to worry about their finances and more focus on their studies.

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<sup>20</sup> UDI part-time work regulations for students outside EU/EEA: <https://www.udi.no/en/received-an-answer/student-permit/your-application-for-a-study-permit-has-been-granted/#link-985>

## ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS

Also, should be considered that Lånekassen requires 3 years of studies at higher education in Norway or two years' full time working in Norway, before non-Norwegian citizens can apply to Lånekassen. This unable many international students' finances, with more time to focus on work that they could spend on their studies and inclusion with the rest of student community.

Therefore, ISU Norway suggests the following actions to help international students being better included in the student community, and consequently help to improve internationalization of education in Norway:

- Evaluate the possibility to allow between 5 and 10 hours more for international students outside EU/EEA for every week besides their studies
- More flexibility for international students to access Lånekassen<sup>21</sup> by allowing 2 years instead of 3 of studies at higher education in Norway, and allow an 80% working during 2 years in Norway instead of 100% before they can apply to Lånekassen

### 5.2 Inclusion in the local community and cultural knowledge

Create an introduction to how and where students can get a part time job close to where they live. A list of places and organizations that hire English-speaking workers should be available to new students. Organize a project where international students can spend Christmas with a Norwegian host family. This can be in cooperation with the student parliament, the local municipality and other organizations. Find host families through friends and ads in the local newspaper. Match students with families for Christmas Eve and/or other possible holidays.

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<sup>21</sup> Lånekassen regulations for foreign students: <https://www.lanekassen.no/nb-NO/Languages/Financial-support-for-foreign-students/Who-is-eligible/>

## **ISU Norway “KVALITETSMELDING” INPUTS**

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