



**Strategy 2019-2023**

**Norwegian University of Life  
Sciences**



# Vision, social mission and values

## Our vision – Knowledge for life

NMBU shall contribute to safeguarding the basis for life in the future through outstanding research, education, dissemination of knowledge and innovation.

## Our social mission

### Our general mission

As a University, NMBU aims to educate outstanding candidates, perform high-quality research that produces new perspectives, and create innovation. NMBU will contribute to a knowledge-based and open public debate and help boost public confidence in research methods and results.

We will have open and respectful cooperation with the world around us, both with the public and private sectors. We will ensure that public funds are effectively and purposefully used, benefiting society as a whole. NMBU shall be an internationally renowned University.

### Our special mission

The world is facing major, complex challenges in areas such as climate change, environmental pollution, population growth, migration, poverty, public and animal health, food and water supply, energy, use and protection of natural resources and areas.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals were adopted in 2015 as a starting point for concerted efforts to safeguard the future of our planet. NMBU represents a unique academic synthesis of environmental and life sciences, bio-production, veterinary medicine, technology, land use planning and economics that provides us with the perfect position to help solve these challenges and enable a sustainable future in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Such solutions will mainly be found at the interface and in the interaction between our subject areas.

NMBU carries a particular responsibility; we will contribute to securing livelihoods for future generations. Our students will be encouraged to adopt a mind set in support of sustainability. They will have the knowledge, competencies and skills required to meet major global societal challenges.

We cultivate strong professional environments and cooperation across subjects and disciplines, promoting new ideas and innovation.



# Our values

Our values illustrate how we interact both internally and with the world around us.

## **Transparency and mutual respect**

Academic life at NMBU is characterised by transparency and mutual respect for each other's backgrounds, experience, work and professional viewpoints. Staff and students are responsible citizens and fellow human beings in the academic community.

## **Major ambitions**

We set high goals and require quality and ethical standards in everything we do. We will make it possible for each individual to be able to fulfil his/her academic potential. We will encourage ambition among our staff and students.

## **Academic freedom**

Academic freedom and independent research are the fundamental principles of the University's activities.

## **Interaction and community**

Our activities shall be characterised by interaction, internally within the University and with the world at large. We shall create an inclusive culture, working environment and academic community founded on transparency, tolerance and interaction.

# Room for opportunity 2019-2023

We observe an increasingly distinct commitment to sustainability in society. This has led to major opportunities for our subject areas at NMBU.

During the strategy period, NMBU's faculties will be colocated. This represents an investment in our subject areas and is hardly coincidental. NMBU comprises two former institutions with strong traditions: The Norwegian College of Agriculture (later renamed the Norwegian University of Life Sciences) was founded in 1859 and the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science in 1936. The original goal for these institutions was to build the nation. Today, NMBU's vision still focuses on the basis for life in the future – on knowledge for life on this planet.

Our professional diversity, unique synthesis of strong professional environments and shared location at Campus Ås make us particularly well-equipped to contribute to the green shift that is essential for Norway and the world.

We will continue to develop a comprehensive, modern and sustainable campus, and we expect to see growth in the number of employees and students. Together with the other institutions on Campus Ås, NMBU will be a national powerhouse for bio-economy. Increased cooperation is the key to success; internally, with other research institutions and with the world around us.

# Overall commitment

## Joint efforts for a sustainable future

This strategy endorses NMBU's overall commitment "Joint efforts for a sustainable future". This is a strategic commitment to excellent research, education, innovation and dissemination of knowledge within environmental and life sciences, targeting the world's Sustainable Development Goals.

NMBU has a professional profile that facilitates a broad sustainability perspective. This puts us in a unique position to contribute with new knowledge in order to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

A concerted effort requires transparency and interaction with the world around us, both with the private and public sectors and within the academic sector. Extensive international cooperation is a prerequisite for success. Knowledge must be shared.

### **NMBU will:**

- act as a trendsetter for decisions and processes in society and be the preferred university for those seeking knowledge within our subject areas.
- educate candidates who are competent, reflective and have an international perspective and who can contribute to change and development.
- conduct research at a high international level and have research groups that are among the world's leading research groups.
- continue investing in excellent education and research.
- enable research and education to provide innovation and value creation for sustainable social development.
- increase international cooperation, researcher mobility and exchange of students by entering into strategic cooperation with internationally and nationally recognised actors in our fields of study. The EU is a priority area.
- promote an increase in dissemination of high-quality research within our subject areas.

# Priority areas

NMBU has selected four areas of priority to support its overall commitment. The global challenges we face require us to meet, interact and innovate across traditional disciplines and established structures. Interdisciplinarity in research, education and innovation is highlighted as the first of our four priority areas.

The second priority area is the digital society. The digital age implies changes in both the premises and the capacity to meet our sustainability challenges. This area requires significant reinforcement, and we aim to help transform the future through a broad professional commitment to digitalisation and new technologies.

A changing world sets high demands on reorganisation and continuous learning. This is equally true for students and staff as for society at large. The third priority area is to reinforce the foundation for lifelong learning.

People are our primary resource. NMBU will be an organisation where staff and students can exploit their potential in a diverse, stimulating and safe working and learning environment. Our fourth priority area is about facilitating creativity and growth, both for NMBU as an organisation and for the individual.

## Interdisciplinarity

A number of complex social challenges addressed by NMBU can only be resolved through collaboration between groups that have complementary competencies and perspectives. This requires that our researchers and students have solid academic expertise within individual disciplines. At the same time, such expertise must be used to solve problems in collaboration with and across different disciplines – both nationally and internationally. This requires us to invest in promoting interdisciplinary cooperation, and to identify and eliminate any barriers to such cooperation.

It is essential to pave the way for constructive, professional cooperation and close integration between research, education and innovation to deal with the major challenges we face. Our students and employees shall be equipped with professional and interdisciplinary competencies for work. This is provided by means of developing forward-looking study programmes, strongly founded on NMBU's learning philosophy, imbedded in research and driven by inspirational learning environments that promote both specialisation and cooperation.

### **NMBU will:**

- develop interdisciplinarity as a general, fundamental principle and working method for research, education, innovation and dissemination.
- build a culture that invests in, and stimulates, collaboration across disciplines.
- train students and staff to interact in teams, and establish venues for integration of research, education and innovation, such as interdisciplinary project areas and concept workshops.

# The digital society

The digital society transforms our lives, our existence and our future. An ever-increasing flow of digital information, access to large amounts of data and analysis capacity, automation, artificial intelligence and development of smart communities, define and describe an opportunity space and a challenge for sustainable development.

NMBU aims to understand how the Fourth Industrial Revolution may enable a sustainable society. We also aim to challenge digital development by reshaping value chains, bringing about changes to working life and influencing human behaviour. Education, research and innovation will contribute to technological developments, and to the understanding of how these influence social development and the individual. The academic community has a particular responsibility to promote critical thinking and development of democratic values to meet the increasing flow of information and major changes in society.

The rapid rate of digital development creates enabling technologies that have the power to transform how we conduct research, education, innovation, dissemination, management and administration. An ever-increasing volume of data and new measurement and analysis methods will enhance our capacity to study complex issues within and between all our subject areas. NMBU will continue to build upon strong traditions and national expertise within applied data analysis and technology to improve competencies within research and education, and to engage in forward-looking innovation.

The educational programmes must follow technological developments and promote critical thinking and understanding of enabling technologies and cultures. Appropriate educational use of new digital technology will help boost quality, customised learning environments and improved learning outcomes. Digitalisation will promote teaching flexibility and increase access to learning resources for lifelong learning.

Digital solutions will also contribute to more transparency and effective, sustainable resource exploitation in all parts of the organisation. This requires a high level of expertise in the utilisation and development of systems.

## **NMBU will:**

- exploit and contribute towards professional development and transformation of education, research and innovation related to the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- develop and utilise new technology and methods to enhance the quality of research, education, innovation and dissemination, and increase the efficiency of administration and management.
- have a forward-looking educational programme and related research that contribute to increased digital competencies and social development.
- develop and exploit digital resources in education that contribute to more effective learning environments, better learning and better evaluation of learning outcome.
- have the skills required to develop, acquire and implement digital infrastructure, and to ensure good information security and good protection of personal data.

# Lifelong learning

Society and the workplace are changing rapidly. An increasing number of people will have a continuous need for new knowledge and new skills in harmony with changing times. The ability to learn how to learn will become an increasingly important part of academic education. Education thus becomes a concept with a new significance. It requires an investigative approach to education and an adjustment to our understanding of formal knowledge.

NMBU will offer education and conduct research that encourage lifelong learning. Our efforts will be based on our learning philosophy, highlighting learning as a process and where responsibility for individual learning is central. Teachers, researchers and students must have an in-depth understanding of how learning materialises and how competencies are developed. NMBU will be a learning organisation noted for its inquisitiveness, courage and creativity.

In order to meet this target, NMBU will develop comprehensive, lifelong learning programmes within our subject areas, where lifelong learning provides the very foundation for how we develop both mainstream study programmes and continuing- and further education.

## **NMBU will:**

- develop lifelong learning programmes with flexible and available course portfolios for business, public administration and others seeking knowledge within our subject areas.
- offer research-based teaching and educate candidates with both academic expertise and generic competencies that are internationally competitive in future working life.
- reinforce the opportunities for pedagogical competence development for teachers and promote an inquisitive approach within teaching.
- strengthen the programme for continuing- and further education within our subject areas for the working life.
- improve possibilities for developing competencies for employees at NMBU.

# A unified University

Knowledge is our strength. NMBU will comprise persons with professional competencies and ambitions who thrive, are respected and are allowed to make use of their skills in a safe and positive learning and working environment. We will recruit talented students and employees. At our University, both students and staff will experience a clear affinity with and pride in the academic community.

NMBU aims for a culture characterised by transparency, community, equality and diversity, where our value base is prominent in all communications and activities internally and externally.

Our campus shall be open and attractive for our local community, and the University shall be a preferred partner for municipal and regional cooperation.

## **NMBU will:**

- ensure that the colocation in 2020 strengthens and creates new opportunities for research, education and innovation, promotes professional and administrative synergies and common and comprehensive exploitation of the educational and research infrastructure.
- conduct targeted recruitment of new employees and students who reflect the ambition to create excellent research, education, innovation and dissemination of knowledge.
- develop the University into a place for well-being, positive learning and working environments with a modern research and educational infrastructure.
- further develop an efficient and professional management and administration.
- facilitate participation and shared decision-making in the development of the individual's own workplace and place to study.
- contribute to positive cooperation with municipal and regional bodies.

Read more <https://www.nmbu.no/en/about-nmbu/strategy>