

Session 5

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Assessing Performance within Higher Education in Norway

Management by objectives has been the main principle for the governance of the public sector in Norway since the 1980ies. Substantial changes have taken place within tertiary education in Norway since the mid-90ies, mainly aimed at encouraging institutions to be more responsive to the needs of society and the economy. As a result of the Norwegian Quality Reform (2002-2006), all higher education institutions were given significantly greater autonomy in managing and organising their activities. The increased institutional autonomy and accountability has initiated radical changes in methods and tools both for the HE-institutions and the authorities. One important step towards greater accountability and improved performance has been the introduction of performance-based criteria to shape higher education budgets and the allocation of public funding.

The transaction from ministerial micromanagement to increased institutional accountability has made appropriate usage of quality indicators and benchmarks an important instrument in order to assess to what extend our goals have been reached.

Our paper will give an overview of how the Ministry uses indicators and benchmarks in for instance preparing the state budget and in the annual consultative meetings between the Ministry of Education and Research and the individual higher education institutions.

The changes in the management of higher education, exemplify the continual and rapid changes in public administration and service provision in Norway. This has led to a stronger emphasis on risk assessment in addition to the more traditional instruments as audit of accounts and productions of services and goal achievements. This poses new challenges for the development of statistical data and indicators. The Ministry's participation in the development of StatRes is one way to meet this challenge.