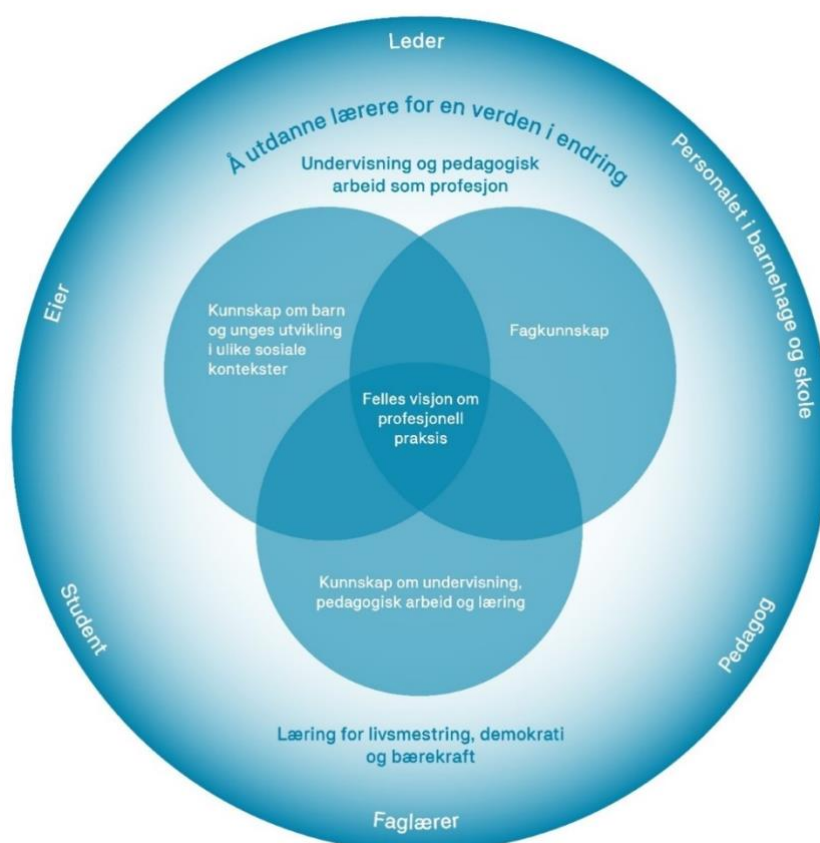


Partnerships for Quality in Teacher Education

Recommendations from the Advisory Council for
Teacher Education in Norway 2025



Advisory Council for Teacher Education
in Norway 2025

October 2020

Advisory Council for Teacher Education in Norway

In June 2017, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research *launched Teacher Education 2025 – National Strategy for Quality and Cooperation in Teacher Education*. In the follow-up work on the goals of the strategy, two new forums were created: a multi-party forum, the *National Forum for Teacher Education and Professional Development (NFLP)*, and an expert body, the *Advisory Council for Teacher Education in Norway 2025 (the Council)*. The NFLP serves as a national arena where the parties can discuss and participate in the development of teacher education and the teaching profession. The Council conducts professionally grounded analyses and gives recommendations to national authorities and the NFLP for use in the follow-up of the teacher education strategy.

Council members bring knowledge from different parts of the sector and from various relevant research areas. They are personally appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research.

The Council members are as follows:

Tine Sophie Prøitz, Head of the Council, Professor, University of South-Eastern Norway

Ane Krogsæter Aarre, Vice-Headmaster, Persbråten Upper Secondary School

Mimi Bjerkestrand, Director of the Municipal Agency for Kindergartens, Bergen local authority

Bjørn Håvard Bjørklund, Head of Department for Childhood, Bømlo local authority

Knut Steinar Engelsen, Professor, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences

Henning Fjørtoft, Professor, NTNU

Marius Larsen, Kindergarten Teacher, Midtstuen Kanvas Kindergarten

Andreas Lund, Professor, University of Oslo

Joakim Olsson, Master's Student, Volda University College

Elin Reikerås, Professor and Head of FILIORUM – Centre for Research in Early Education and Care, University of Stavanger

Siw Skrøvset, Associate Professor and Head of ProTed – Centre for Professional Learning in Teacher Education, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Mette Tollefsrud, Associate Professor, OsloMet – Metropolitan University

The Ministry of Education and Research has delegated secretarial responsibilities for the Council to the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. The secretariat consists of Tove Margrethe Thommesen (Head of the Secretariat), Anne Turid Veigaard and Marijana Kelentrić. Irene Felde Olausen from Universities Norway – Teacher Education (UHR-LU) attends the Council meetings and helps with secretarial tasks.

The Council's work is grounded in the research-based and experience-based knowledge that the members have available to them as representatives from teacher education and the education sector. As such, the Council's knowledge base is founded on the members' collective complementary knowledge and their ability to obtain and process new knowledge and experiences from the sector. This is partly brought about through the development of new knowledge and processing of existing knowledge, information and experiences, and partly through critical exchanges of views, discussion and reflection in the Council.

The Council's analyses and recommendations are primarily aimed at the Ministry of Education and Research and the NFLP as the commissioning party, but the Council also considers the teacher education programmes and sector to be important target groups. This entails a method of working in which the Council endeavours to listen to and engage with the sector's perspectives to ensure that the Knowledge Base is up-to-date and relevant.

The Advisory Council for Teacher Education in Norway 2025 differs from UHR-LU and the Knowledge Centre for Education in that its work is anchored in the goals of *Teacher Education 2025*. The Council is also characterised by the fact that its members are appointed by virtue of their personal expertise and do not represent a specific institution or employer.

The Council will be in place until 31 December 2025, with the potential for extension if necessary.

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Abstract

This report corresponds to parts two and three of the mandate given to the Council by the Ministry of Education and Research to assess the need to use legal regulations to specify overall responsibilities, roles and duties within partnerships between teacher education programmes and kindergartens/schools and their owners. This report also supplements the Council's first sub-report corresponding to part one of the commissioned work, *Partnerships in Teacher Education – a knowledge base* (Advisory Council for Teacher Education, 2019), including a review of existing partnerships agreements in the sector and dialogue meetings between the Council and managers of kindergartens, schools and their owners in spring 2020.

This elaboration on the Knowledge Base enhances the Council's impression from the findings of sub-report 1 on variation and diversity in the partnerships. This pertains to the organisation of collaboration in the partnerships, as well as theme areas that are the focus of these partnerships. The Knowledge Base also showed that practice training and studies are often an integrated component of the collaboration work in the partnerships. The Council has therefore continued its broad approach to the concept of teacher education kindergartens and schools in this report based on the acknowledgment of teacher education kindergartens and schools as an area undergoing strong development. The Council has concluded that overly rigid definitions of certain types of partnerships would not be conducive to ongoing local development efforts.

Partnerships between teacher education programmes, kindergartens and schools in the form of teacher education kindergartens and schools are still relatively new in spite of the extensive experience of some institutions with this. Although there is some knowledge about this subject, the Council believes there is a need for more knowledge on how such partnerships function and the most effective form of organisation. The Council believes it is essential that the partnerships are organised and designed in a manner that promotes innovation and that children, young people and students have equal opportunities of high quality in kindergartens, schools and teacher education programmes. The Council has also agreed on a number of partnership principles that should apply regardless of whether or not these are laid down in legislation:

- The students' right to high-quality education must be safeguarded
- The goal of professional development and educational quality must apply to all parties involved
- The partnerships must be based on equity between partners
- The partnerships must have a common goal, clarified expectations and good communication
- Local flexibility must be safeguarded
- Funding must be predictable

There are a number of pros and cons to regulating partnership initiatives. The pros are related to the desire to ensure fairness and equity in kindergartens, schools and educational opportunities. The Council believes that regulation can help ensure a certain level of equality and reduce unintended differences between teacher education programmes. Predictability and continuity are also aspects that favour regulation, as these can contribute to a clearer recognition of the knowledge and expertise of the field of practice as an essential part of teacher education.

Arguments against regulation pertain to how this will affect the autonomy and trust underlying the sectors. The Knowledge Base and dialogue meetings show that trust and local latitude are important for developing solid 'third space' collaboration. The Council feels strongly that this must be safeguarded if collaboration is to be regulated.

The Council realises that the goal of teacher education kindergarten and school initiatives in *Teacher Education 2025* is ambitious and believes that it requires a complex approach to the types of tools that should be used. In addition to examining regulations, the Council has therefore also examined other tools and measures that can also support partnership efforts, namely financial incentives and support resources.

The Knowledge Base shows that teacher education programmes that have been granted funding from the Ministry of Education and Research to develop a partnership have established collaborations with teacher education schools to a greater extent than programmes without such support. The Knowledge Base also shows that it is not necessarily considerable funding that is needed to stimulate partnership development, but that predictability is extremely important. As the Council sees it, long-term financing measures give the partnerships the necessary predictability and possibilities for continuous resource planning. This in turn can help overcome the challenges associated with capacity building and sustainability over time. The Council also believes that short-term financing can support more innovative processes and initiatives, which in turn could lead to innovations and further development.

The Council believes it is important that the development of partnerships is recognised to a considerable degree with resources that acknowledge the significance of local flexibility. Consequently, the Council feels strongly about partnerships receiving experience and research-based support, as well as guidance that can serve as inspiration and motivate collaboration. In the Council's view, national, regional and local arenas for dialogue and the sharing of knowledge and experiences, resource availability information and informative content specifics for agreements can support partnerships. Combined with financial support and clear expectations of collaboration in the partnership, the Council believes this can support the development of robust 'third space' collaboration.

1 Introduction

1.1 Commissioned study of partnerships in teacher education

In February 2019, the Advisory Council for Teacher Education in Norway 2025 (the Council) was commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Research to study and develop a national partnership framework (Appendix 2025). The work is based on one of the overarching goals of the *Teacher Education 2025* strategy: “*Stable and mutually evolving partnerships between teacher education institutions, the kindergarten and school sectors*” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a, p. 8).

The commissioned work includes a request for the Council to contribute to the strategy follow-up by assessing whether the framework conditions in the stakeholders’ steering documents are acceptable and by making recommendations on partnering principles that can support institutions in developing teacher education kindergartens and schools. The aim of the work is to support the development of partnerships in a way that enables all stakeholders to strengthen their efforts and commitment.

The work consists of three parts:

- 1) *Describe how teacher education kindergartens and schools are currently organised for the different stakeholders in the sector, including the statutory and regulatory framework and funding allocation letters.*
- 2) *Assess the need to use legal regulations to specify overall responsibilities, roles and duties within the partnerships and, if necessary, discuss the content of such regulations. The use of other steering documents, such as circulars/allocation letters may also be assessed.*
- 3) *Propose overarching partnering principles in the form of a guide, handbook or resource website (Appendix 1).*

In December 2019, the Council submitted the report *Partnerships in Teacher Education – a knowledge base* (Advisory Council for Teacher Education in Norway, 2019) to the Ministry of Education and Research. The Knowledge Base is the result of the first part of the commissioned work. This report corresponds to parts two and three of the commissioned work and is the Council’s final report.

In 2020, the head of the Council and secretariat presented the Knowledge Base to the National Forum for Teacher Education and Professional Development (NFLP) and at a network meeting for teacher education programmes with partnerships involving teacher education schools. These have been important arenas where the Council has received valuable feedback and input for its continuing efforts.

Four Council meetings were held in 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the spring and autumn 2020 meetings were held digitally. In spring 2020, Council also conducted five dialogue meetings with the administrators and owners of kindergartens and schools.

The Council would like to thank all those who have contributed to this initiative. Teacher education programmes participated in the scoping study and sent the Council partnership agreements and other relevant documents. The network group for leaders and coordinators of university/teacher education partnerships provided useful input during meetings with the secretariat. Kindergarten and

school owners and administrators contributed during dialogue meetings with valuable insights into partnerships from their perspective. The Council would also like to thank Ida K. R. Hatlevik, associate professor in the Department of Teacher Education and School Research at the University of Oslo, and senior consultants Eva Fetscher and Inger-Lise Kalviknes Bore from NOKUT, who provided critical reading of and comments on the report during the final phase of the work.

1.2 Part one – Knowledge Base

In working on the Knowledge Base, the Council reviewed existing research, conducted a national review of work involving teacher education kindergartens and schools in teacher education in Norway and presented examples of existing partnerships with teacher education kindergartens and schools. The Council also established an analytical framework describing the quality factors that the Council considers important for partnerships between teacher education and sector stakeholders. The Knowledge Base is based primarily on the teacher education perspective, although it also mentions other conditions in the sector. As a result, the Knowledge Base provided an initial overview of the partnership theme, a subject area characterised by complexity. This subject area encompasses various stakeholders at different levels in the education system in which formal, structural and cultural boundaries are designed for transcending partnerships and cooperation to a limited degree. It is also emphasised in the Knowledge Base that it is precisely the acknowledgement of this complexity in terms of agency that is important and that, for example, municipal and owner perspectives would be explored in connection with the final report.

The Knowledge Base has provided the Council with a good foundation for its continuing efforts and provided a basis for highlighting factors that appear to ensure a solid partnership. At the same time, the Knowledge Base clarifies important challenges that the Council has taken into account when working on parts two and three of the commissioned work.

The majority of teacher education institutions have established partnerships with schools. Similar initiatives are currently underway in the kindergarten sector, but are not established to the same degree in all regions. The Knowledge Base also shows that there is considerable collaboration locally between teacher education institutions and kindergartens, schools and owners, and that these initiatives are characterised by variation and diversity.

The Council has identified the necessity to acquire more knowledge about the role of the kindergarten and school sector in partnerships. With reference to the Knowledge Base, the Council questioned whether the perspectives of the field of practice and owners are sufficiently addressed in the current partnership designs, as well as whether there may be untapped potential in a stronger emphasis on equity between the parties. This is followed up on in this report by gaining more knowledge about the experiences of kindergarten, schools and owners with the current partnership designs.

The Council also questioned *how* equity and balance can be achieved in the partnerships between the parties involved. Kindergartens, schools and teacher education have different core tasks and partnership activities often appear to be at the initiative and terms of the teacher education programme. The Knowledge Base showed that this leads to the kindergartens and schools primarily becoming recipients instead of active participants with ownership of the partnerships.

A final question that the Council wanted to have answered pertained to the relationship between equity in teacher education and quality in kindergartens and schools – and the role of the partnership as a contributor to quality improvement efforts. How can it be assured that partnership arrangements provide quality for all students in the programmes and the children and young people in the kindergartens and schools?

1.3 Structure of the report

In this report, the Council follows up on the questions asked in the Knowledge Base by carrying out parts two and three of the commissioned work, which entail assessing regulations and other steering instruments in order to arrive at recommendations for general partnering principles.

Chapter 2 discusses the types of guidelines found in the *Teacher Education 2025* strategy document, while Chapter 3 presents the common frameworks and background for the assessments made in the report. This chapter also presents the partnership principles underlying the Council's considerations.

In Chapters 4 and 5, the Knowledge Base is expanded on through an analysis of the agreements for the partnerships included in the scoping study carried out in autumn 2019 and through a summary of dialogue meetings with kindergarten and school owners and administrators conducted in the spring of 2020. The intention here is to obtain deeper knowledge about the organisation and content of the partnerships and to assess whether these warrants recommending tools that can support the partnerships through local regulation of collaborations. In analysing the agreements, the Council also obtained advice from legal experts as to what should be included in such contracts and compared these recommendations to the partnership agreements.

In Chapter 6, the Council assesses the need for partnership regulations, as well as several other relevant tools. The Council believes that an assessment of the possible need for regulations should not be viewed in isolation, but in relation to other relevant tools that can help achieve the same goals. For this reason, the Council has carried out an overall assessment of the need for several possible tools, which is also reflected in the recommendations stemming from these assessments.

2 Guidelines in *Teacher Education 2025*

In *Teacher Education 2025 – National Strategy for Quality and Cooperation in Teacher Education* (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a), the government expresses a desire to strengthen practice training and R&D collaboration through teacher education kindergartens and schools. To achieve this, they want to **establish national frameworks** for partnerships between teacher education institutions and kindergarten and school owners to create teacher education kindergartens and teacher education schools.

Teacher Education 2025 points out that over time, teacher education has been characterised by a high rate of change and pressure to adapt: the education programmes have been affected by efforts to build stronger professional communities through consolidation in the university and university college sector and the introduction of primary and secondary teacher education on the Master's level. Evaluations have revealed that "*the reforms were also the result of low quality in many programmes*" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a, p. 9). The challenges outlined in *Teacher Education 2025* comprise three main elements: 1) practice relevance, 2) research basis and 3) interdisciplinary collaboration. The strategic *goals* for teacher education kindergarten and school initiatives cover a relatively broad spectrum and focus on practice training, R&D work and the quality development of teacher education in general.

Målbilde for innsatsområdet i 2025

1. Det er inngått avtaler mellom hver lærerutdanningsinstitusjon og lokale barnehage- og skoleiere om et definert antall lærerutdanningsbarnehager og lærerutdanningsskoler som kjennetegnes av:
 - «klinisk praksis», det vil si utprøving og modellering av undervisning i skolen og pedagogisk praksis i barnehagen
 - et fagmiljø av praksislærere
 - lærerne fra lærerutdanningsinstitusjonen deltar aktivt i praksisopplæringen
 - delte stillinger og ph.d.-utdannede lærere er vanlige
 - lærerutdanningsinstitusjonen og lærerutdanningsskolen/barnehagen er kunnskapsproduserende fellesskap som videreutvikler seg ved bruk av felles fagspråk
 - stabilt og langsiktig samarbeid mellom partnerne
 - likeverdighet og balanse i aktørenes innflytelse på samarbeidet
- det foregår relevant forskning på barnehagens og skolens utfordringer og løsninger
- studieprogrammene og campusundervisningen får løpende tilbakemeldinger fra praksis, delvis ved at universitets- og høyskolelærerne selv kommer ut i praksisfeltet, og delvis ved at representanter fra skolene og barnehagene trekkes inn i kvalitetsutviklingen ved lærerutdanningsinstitusjonene
- partnerskapene deler erfaringer i eget nasjonalt partnerforum, og erfaringer spres og anvendes i alle barnehager og skoler hvor det drives praksisopplæring
2. Hver lærerutdanningsinstitusjon har i tillegg en rekke avtaler med eiere av vanlige praksisskoler og -barnehager for å kunne tilby det volum av praksisopplæring som er nødvendig i henhold til rammeplanene. Størstedelen av praksisopplæringen foregår her. Det er en forutsetning at de vanlige praksisskolene og -barnehagene ikke nedprioriteres til fordel for lærerutdannings-skolene og -barnehagene, men at partnerskapene er av verdi også for disse. Det må etableres ordninger for å spre gode erfaringer med samarbeid mellom lærerutdanningsinstitusjoner, barnehager og skoler.

Figure 1. *Teacher Education 2025 – National Strategy for Quality and Cooperation in Teacher Education*, p. 14.

“One key objective of using partnerships in teacher education as an element in this strategy is to ensure that all students are given the opportunity at some point during their studies to practise in selected institutions – teacher education schools and teacher education kindergartens – specially equipped for R&D-based (*‘clinical’*) *practice training*” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017a, p. 13). This is also addressed on p. 39 of this report. The strategy also highlights the further need for ordinary practice kindergartens and schools in order to offer the necessary volume of practice training in accordance with the framework plans. Teacher education kindergarten and school initiatives must also be of value for regular practice kindergartens and schools.

In the Council’s opinion, *Teacher Education 2025* provides important strategic aims for the further development of partnerships in teacher education in Norway. At the same time, it raises a number of important questions, such as how to understand the goal of ensuring that students have the opportunity at some point during their studies to practise in selected institutions – teacher education schools and teacher education kindergartens, how this access can be ensured and whether it is realistic. Other questions relate to how the knowledge and experience developed in a partnership can and should be transferred to other teacher education programmes, kindergartens and schools, how the follow-up of goals can be facilitated in comparison to the current framework plans for teacher education and how, for example, the need to follow up on students’ work on new Master’s theses can be met in relation to R&D work in the partnerships. Other questions relate to the relationship between teacher education kindergartens and schools and regular practice kindergartens and schools. The Knowledge Base has taught us that today’s practice training is preferably an integral part of partnership development and not necessarily a separate unit in the education programme, but falls within the same context. It is a matter of how separate or integrated partnership activities and practice activities in the teacher education programmes can be considered.

3 Council's principles and basis for its assessments

This chapter discusses the viewpoints underlying the Council's discussions and assessments in carrying out the commissioned work. It also includes a presentation of the Council's understanding of the partnership concept, fundamental challenges associated with change, understanding of quality efforts in relation to partnership and vision for teacher education. These form the basis for a number of general principles that the Council believes are especially important for the assessments made in Chapter 6.

3.1 Teacher education kindergarten and school terms

In the Council's previous efforts to describe the current organisation of teacher education kindergartens and schools, it became evident early on that teacher education kindergartens and schools are not unambiguous terms, but comprise different forms of cooperation and activities. In the Knowledge Base, the Council discussed several terms and arrived at a number of clarifications and parameters. These form the basis for the discussions of partnership and teacher education kindergartens and schools in this report. The Council's explanation of terms is based partly on the literature, partly on the teacher education strategy, partly on the results of the scoping study conducted and partly on the Council's own discussions on interpretations of the work commissioned.

In the Knowledge Base, the Council concluded that defining distinctive boundaries between practice kindergartens/schools and teacher education kindergartens/schools does not support the extensive ongoing local development efforts in the sector. In many places, practice collaboration forms the starting point for the development and establishment of partnerships. The Council has therefore opted for a broad approach to the terms (see Figure 2 below) based on the understanding that this is a field that is evolving rapidly. The Council has concluded that overly rigid definitions of certain types of partnerships do not support ongoing local development efforts.

Teacher education kindergartens and schools

Agreements with a *main focus* on

- 1) Knowledge development and sharing,
- 2) Development of teacher education programmes through new forms of agency,
- 3) Practice training

Practice kindergartens and schools

Agreements on practice schools/kindergartens, may also include guidance to new graduates, professional development, R&D, etc.

Kindergartens and schools with partnership agreements

Agreements on tasks and initiatives, but without practice training

Kindergartens and schools with varying and occasional contact with teacher education programmes

Figure 2. Partnerships in teacher education

However, the Council believes that partnerships in the form of teacher education kindergartens and schools are of higher quality than conventional practice kindergartens and schools. The long-term partnership development goal should be to develop better teacher education programmes through new forms of agency that can lead to a qualitative improvement of the academic, relational and experience-based work in teacher education programmes.

3.2 Fundamental challenges associated with change

Developing and establishing partnership arrangements involves change for all parties involved, from the academic staff in the teacher education programme to the employees at the kindergarten and school, as well as the kindergarten and school owners. According to Lai, Mcnaughton, Jesson & Wilson (2020), any change in kindergartens and schools will encounter five fundamental challenges. The five challenges outlined by Lai et al. (2020) are relevant for the questions that the Council is addressing:

1. Variability

In all learning situations, there will be variability between students, teachers and kindergartens or classrooms, as well as between regions and countries. This variability is only natural, since the teaching profession comprises individuals with different knowledge, skills and values, since framework and curriculums may vary and since the physical and social resources for professionals vary.

2. Scalability

In spite of an increasing number of studies of what works in kindergartens and schools, it has proven to be difficult to scale up solutions from controlled conditions to entire systems. One reason is that schools and kindergartens are different. Another reason is that teachers often adapt activities and strategies to their own and local needs. This natural variation between schools and kindergartens makes it difficult to identify 'best practices' in order to implement them on a large scale. This also means that what may be a well-functioning partnership one place may not necessarily function as effectively elsewhere.

3. Capability

Teachers and leaders who are to implement reforms cannot simply be given manuals on how to teach. There is considerable diversity among kindergartens and classrooms, so teachers must be able to adapt to different situations. This understanding of teachers as experts in adaptation corresponds to the vision of teachers as competent professionals. At the same time, it means that variation will be a characteristic of the sector. Building capability may therefore entail enabling teachers, leaders and experts to collaborate through appropriate frameworks for local partnerships.

4. Acceleration

Educational reforms often aim to solve inequality, such as by providing additional resources to struggling students to enable them to progress on equal footing with other students. This can be challenging when other social and economic mechanisms interfere with such acceleration. Acceleration in terms of partnership revolves around ensuring that all teacher education programmes are of *high* quality. As with children and young people, it is important that changes in

the system – such as the development of partnerships – do not contribute structures that amplify inequality.

5. Sustainability

The fifth and final challenge is to ensure that changes are sustainable over time. To what degree will a change process bear fruit during the project period? What happens when teachers and managers switch jobs to another school or when kindergartens recruit children from new demographic groups? Similarly, a relevant question is what happens when teacher education institutions change? Changes associated with opportunities for partnership development must be viewed in light of the need for sustainable arrangements for all those involved.

3.3 Quality work

There may be several reasons to establish partnerships between teacher education programmes, schools and kindergartens and their owners, depending on the level in question. On the overall level, the goal of a partnership can be said to be to ensure quality in teacher education and in the school and kindergarten. Quality as a concept and phenomenon is generally considered to be widely understood, yet it is difficult to describe and define all the same. One reason for this is that quality is defined differently depending on the individual and situation. Rather than searching for the perfect quality description of partnership (see, for example, Hatlevik, Engelién & Jorde, 2020 for a discussion on the characteristics of a well-functioning partnership), the Council has chosen to emphasise the quality dimension in partnerships by examining ‘quality work’ (Elken & Stensaker, 2020). This type of approach involves recognising the many facets of quality, which teachers in schools and kindergartens, staff in teacher education programmes and administrators on all levels strive to achieve through the collaboration, development and coordination of activities. Quality work focuses in part on the formal and often routine organisational structures found in the form of quality assurance and performance measurements, internal routines and procedures, responsibility and accountability, and partly on the more informal and often local efforts expressed in intentions and agency aimed at improving and developing educational practices. In other words, quality work is dialectic and encompasses both stability and change.

When it comes to partnerships, the Council’s perspective on quality work is based on this understanding. Quality work cannot be limited to the internal work of teacher education programmes alone. Instead, it will have to emphasise both the organisational structures and informal practices between the parties in a partnership. This type of perspective entails identifying what is needed to make the necessary links between organisational and pedagogical dimensions in teacher education, at kindergartens, schools and their owners. It means emphasising processes that can contribute to developing partnerships that guarantee appropriate and well-functioning collaborative relationships between teacher education programmes, schools, kindergartens and owners in order to arrive at a mutual knowledge exchange that benefits all those involved.

The Council believes that this type of quality work must be emphasised in the development of partnerships in order to achieve a shared vision on professional practice in teacher education and in schools and kindergartens. In the Knowledge Base, the Council focused on the content of existing partnerships and the challenges and potential improvements that exist using four thematic areas of

cooperation: *collaboration on study design and organisation, collaboration on student learning activities in different context, collaboration on R&D and kindergarten/school development and the actual organisation of partnerships in relation to the practice aspects of the study.* The areas of cooperation provided a foundation for better understanding how the institutions relate to important qualitative factors in order to create coherence. In this report, the Council has chosen to continue to focus on these four areas of cooperation to ensure a link between teacher education programmes, kindergartens, schools and their owners.

The Council believes that kindergartens and schools, in collaboration with their owners and the university/university college sector, will be able to concretise and further develop quality for a professional community. This is understood as interaction between students and subject teachers and among students themselves that prepares them for the duties of the profession, while at the same time learning to adopt a critical attitude that can help develop a professional community. Educational management on all levels aims to provide the best possible conditions for this interaction and student learning. This interaction involves different forms of knowledge (professional, academic, experience-based, legal, organisational, managerial, etc.) that can be made available and operationalised in cooperation among equals. The Council's vision is based on the notion that the results of partnerships can be more than the sum of their parts and entail a quality chain from the owners via management to staff and students. This type of quality work requires arenas that are both national and long-term. The Council believes that partnerships are an important answer to the question of how we can strengthen quality in teacher education. The model in Figure 3 below was developed in the Knowledge Base (Advisory Council for Teacher Education in Norway, 2019, p. 32) and assumes that partnerships contribute to the development and implementation of the vision on professional practice in which students and other participants are the subject.

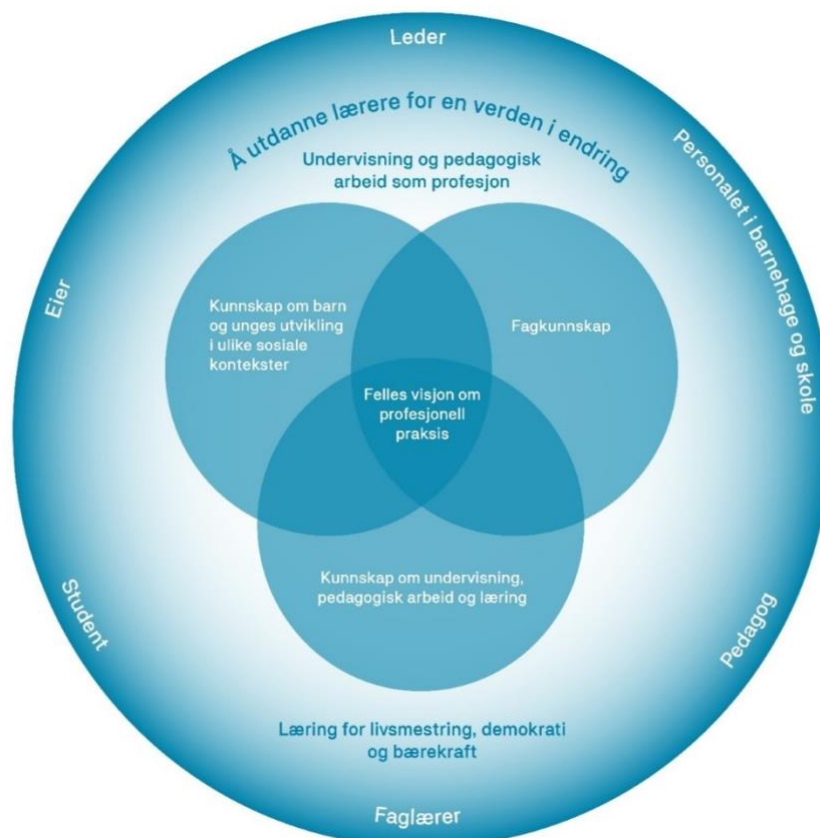


Figure 3: Partnership framework from the Knowledge Base

The four areas of cooperation were developed as an analytical framework in the Knowledge Base and are used in this report. These areas are not mutually exclusive, but indicate specific areas of cooperation that often overlap and are the focus of partnership efforts. Partnerships offer the opportunity to create better links between these areas. The four areas encompass the following:

- a. *Collaboration on study design and organisation* entails collaboration on vision formulation, programme and subject plans, organisation of teaching and placements, various steering groups, advice and selection, etc. in teacher education programmes.
- b. *Collaboration on student learning* encompasses student learning in the course of a study programme, both on campus and during placements. This includes practice training, planning and carrying out instruction and collaboration on campus, discipline subject learning, subject didactic learning, learning about children and young people's learning and development, learning about kindergartens and schools as an organisation, assignments on the Bachelor and Master's level and other R&D work with a focus on student learning.
- c. *Collaboration on R&D and kindergarten and school development* entails cooperation that is not directly related to student learning activities, but can still influence their learning in the future.
- d. *The actual organisation of the partnership in relation to the practice aspects of the study* pertains to, for example, access to a kindergarten or school, presence in practice and inclusion in the kindergarten or school practice.

3.4 Principles for partnership activities

A partnership between teacher education programmes, kindergarten and schools in the form of teacher education kindergartens and schools is still a relatively new phenomenon, and although we already have some knowledge about such initiatives, the Council believes more knowledge is needed on how such partnerships work and can best be organised.

All the same, the Council has agreed on a number of principles for partnerships that are necessary for the partnerships to contribute to achieving a joint vision on professional practice. In general, the Council believes it is essential that the partnerships are organised and designed in a manner that ensures innovation and that children, young people and students have equal opportunities of high quality in kindergartens, schools and teacher education programmes. These principles form the basis for the Council's considerations and assessments and are as follows:

- **The students' right to high-quality education must be safeguarded.**
This pertains to instruction on campus and during placements in a kindergarten or school, regardless of how the partnerships are organised between the teacher education programmes and teacher education kindergartens and schools.
- **The goal of professional development and educational quality must apply to all.**
Partnerships must be structured to contribute to the development of quality and R&D in teacher education that benefits all kindergartens and schools. This requires communication and experience sharing among teacher education programmes and kindergarten and schools in the broadest sense of the word.

- **The partnerships must be based on equity between partners.**
 The partnerships must be based on equity and balance between the complementary roles of the participants and influence on the collaboration. The contributions of teacher education programmes, owners, kindergartens and schools must stem from their core activities, while at the same time contributing to the tasks associated with the partnership.
- **The partnerships must have a common goal, clarified expectations and good communication.**
 The parties involved in the partnership must be involved from the very start in order to develop joint goals and a mutual understanding of roles, division of tasks and obligations.
- **Local flexibility must be safeguarded.**
 Sustainable innovations require ownership and the possibility to adapt the work to existing local conditions. The Knowledge Base highlights the possibilities that exist in *'third space collaboration'*¹, which requires that the expertise of all partners is brought to the table. A shared experience of benefit is important in such partnerships.
- **Funding must be predictable.**
 Conclusive and predictable funding of partnerships is essential for participation on equal footing. Predictability is important for both short-term targeted efforts and more long-term investments to ensure lasting partnerships of equals.

¹ See Chapter 5 of the Knowledge Base.

4 Partnership agreements

The Knowledge Base showed that there are few formal guidelines or other schemes that regulate partnerships between teacher education programmes, kindergartens, schools and owners apart from partnership agreements. This makes partnership agreements important for understanding the content of partnerships, the parties involved and their roles and responsibilities. The Council has therefore decided to take a closer look at partnership agreements to find out more about how partnerships are organised, i.e. how these agreements regulate the partnerships, what they regulate, the degree of obligation and if relevant, the specific obligations.

4.1 Partnership agreements in general

In its work on the Knowledge Base, the Council sent a questionnaire in autumn 2019 to 21 teacher education institutions in Norway (see Appendix 4 of the Knowledge Base). The respondents were asked, among other things, to enclose examples of announcements, partnership agreements, assessments and current research. The Council received 22 documents in the form of partnership or cooperation agreements, amendments to partnership agreements or framework agreements from 12 of the teacher education institutions approached.

Quite a few of the agreements submitted fall under general letters of intent or practice agreements at the institutions. The majority are between teacher education institutions and schools/school owners. Partnerships between teacher education institutions and kindergarten are primarily a new phenomenon, which is why we have few examples of agreements from the kindergarten sector in our material.

The vast majority of agreements are signed by the relevant leaders in the teacher education programme (such as the head of studies, head of the institute and/or dean) and at the school owners (such as the head of childhood and youth services, head of section, chief municipal executive and/or county chief executive). A review of the agreements also shows that six of them are made directly with the kindergarten/school, with the head teacher/headmaster as accountable.

Many of the agreements are based on existing agreements, such as current partner school agreements, or expand on letters of intent for collaboration on placements between the school owner and teacher education institution. A number of them also involve a mentor agreement. Most of the agreements are limited to a specific time period of two to four years.

The goal formulations in the agreements shed light on the different conditions in the partnership. Some of them deal with structure and common tasks, while others are more oriented towards the qualitative factors of the collaboration. The goals are not only oriented towards basic education for teachers, but also professional development in a broader sense. The majority describe what they wish to achieve for the parties in the partnership and to a lesser degree the benefits for other teacher education programmes and kindergarten/schools.

All the agreements aim to develop close collaboration between the parties to ensure a high quality of practice training. It is evident that the agreements have been entered into to secure a commitment to the partnership between the teacher education institution and field of practice and to promote collaboration with an emphasis on the core tasks of the teaching profession and social mandate.

Agreements related to a single teacher education institution consistently use the term *mandatory interaction*, whereas the others use *collaboration* when describing the purpose of the partnership.

The majority of agreements describe goals related to R&D work and several agreements stress that a goal has been formulated based on *Teacher Education 2025*. There are also a number of agreements with goal descriptions that refer to trying new forms of collaboration, helping to expand and further develop cooperation on student practice training, teaching, research and development projects and enhanced competence. A number of agreements indicate that they serve to promote mutual recognition, respect, equity and balance in the collaboration. Two of the agreements include the goal to develop knowledge of how to create good and safe learning environments and strengthen student motivation and learning. The majority of agreements aim to increase collaboration with an emphasis on the core tasks of the teaching profession and social mandate. Some also include the goal to use experiences and results to strengthen other schools in the region and other teacher education institutions.

4.2 Agreements in relation to the four areas of cooperation

As shown in the Council's partnership model (Knowledge Base, p. 32), it is the participants in the partnership, with their different input and complementary expertise, who contribute to the teacher education activities. The analysis of the collected material allows for an investigation of the degree to which the perspectives of the different participants are represented. A review was conducted of the agreements based on the areas of cooperation used in the scoping study in the Knowledge Base (p. 38). The purpose of such a presentation is to gain insight into the elements of the agreement and how the agreement is structured, as well as into a basis for recommendations in keeping with the Council's mandate.

a. Collaboration on study design and organisation

The scoping study shows a diversity of individuals in different types of positions, both administrative and academic, who are involved in partnership activities. This is also reflected in the agreements that describe the tasks, roles and responsibilities of the participants on different levels: teacher education institution, kindergarten/school owner level, head teacher/leader level and, in some agreements for practice training, supervisors. Many agreements that mention teacher education schools refer to steering groups consisting of representatives from the municipality and county (such as the school owner, headmaster or teacher representative) and teacher education institutions (such as the dean, head of studies or student representative). The kindergarten agreements mention academic coordinators and regular partnership meetings. The agreements describe the steering group tasks, such as ensuring that the goals of the agreement are reached and a division of tasks, as well as a connection between goals and resources. The project manager serves as a secretary for the steering group, which is also a connecting link between the partners in the collaboration. Several agreements also mention the establishment of a working committee to coordinate projects and ensure good cooperation. The members of the working committee are representatives from teacher education schools, teacher education programmes, project coordinators and, in some cases, from the school owner. Of the agreements we received in September 2019, none contain descriptions of this in relation to kindergartens. As mentioned above, the Council recognises that there has been an expansive development of partnerships involving kindergartens in the last year.

Most agreements also have a separate section describing concrete forms of collaboration or plans of action.

b. Collaboration on student learning in different contexts

Collaboration on student learning activities is mentioned in several of the agreements. In the school sector, the role of the headmaster and teachers is mentioned in terms of, for example, providing input on current and school-relevant themes for student Master's theses, involving students in school development projects where possible and relevant, and facilitating practice students in obtaining data from the school for their Master's theses. The head of the kindergarten is responsible for practice training at the kindergarten and considers the kindergarten part of the students' learning arena.

In terms of concrete measures in the partnerships, the scoping study shows that around half the institutions have dual positions as part of the partnership agreement. Dual positions are included in only a few agreements. Some of these describe the FTE percentage in relation to the different institutions and that they are funded by the teacher education institution or practice location itself. Those that do not define FTE percentages or time commitments refer to other cooperation agreements on placements. Dual positions are a new initiative and mentioned as a development measure in which both owners/administrators and the teacher education programme have a shared responsibility.

A few agreements specify joint responsibility in which all parties are committed to providing the students with practical and knowledge-based learning in accordance with the applicable laws, guidelines and national curriculum. Two of the agreements targeting teacher education kindergartens state that the partner kindergartens contribute practice-related information/instruction for students. Only one of the agreements mentions what is expected of students, stating that they should be good role models for the profession, practice school and education programme, take initiative and contribute to positive interaction. It is also interesting that active participation is expected in terms of being prepared and having a plan stating the partnership objectives and intentions.

c. Collaboration on R&D and kindergarten/school development

The scoping study shows that cooperation on R&D is included in most partnerships and a third of teacher education programmes state that they collaborate on PhD programmes. The majority of agreements state that the teacher education institution must facilitate the conducting of relevant research on the teacher education school's challenges and solutions. The teacher education institutions must also help with preparing outlines, writing applications and applying for admission to public sector PhD degrees. Many of the agreements also mention the school's responsibility to participate in R&D projects in collaboration with teacher education programme researchers. A few mention the owner's responsibility to facilitate public sector PhD degrees and that the school should aim to hire someone specifically for this purpose. Agreements pertaining to kindergartens state that it is the responsibility of the teacher education institution to ensure collaboration and participation in R&D projects, i.e. Master's and PhD students' R&D efforts. One of the agreements includes requirements for R&D collaboration between three parties: students, teacher education kindergartens and kindergarten teacher education programmes.

It is clear in the agreements that the teacher education institutions are responsible for providing the partner kindergarten/school with the necessary information and giving them access to the

competencies they need to perform the role of teacher education kindergarten/school. Agreements on competence development are mentioned in a number of agreements, by which the teacher education institutions, for example, are to invite the partners to attend professional seminars, theme days, relevant lectures and conferences. Several of the agreements also require that the teacher education institutions offer continuing education in supervision pedagogy and that the owners are to encourage the partner kindergartens and schools to participate in R&D projects and contribute relevant practice information.

A few of the agreements specify that it is the responsibility of the kindergarten and school owner/leader to ensure that the kindergartens and schools have pedagogic staff who are interested in developing the field of practice. Moreover, the owners must ensure that the practice training supervisors have undergone pedagogic supervision training or ensure that they have time to participate in this type of education programme. As regards kindergartens, the agreements also include the requirement that the head teacher/general manager have a degree in teacher education or comparable experience, as well as a minimum number of practice training supervisors with a degree in teacher education.

d. Actual organisation of partnership in relation to the practice aspects of the study

A common theme in the agreements is that the teacher education institutions are responsible for managing and coordinating the collaboration with the teacher education kindergartens and schools. Several of the agreements specify that the teacher education institution has academic responsibility for the practice training or overall responsibility for the content and quality of the practice training and for progression between the practice periods. The teacher education institution must also provide several of its subject teachers with the time and resources needed to further develop the partnership with practice training supervisors at the teacher education schools or ensure that the practice training supervisors at the kindergartens can acquire the necessary competence. Most of the agreements describe the tasks, roles and responsibilities of the parties on different levels: owner level, management level and, in some agreements, practice training supervision level.

In terms of academic tasks and R&D, the teacher education institutions are responsible for preparations and following up on students on placements. In a few agreements, this division of responsibilities is clearly assigned to a few individual who are practice managers and academic staff at teacher education institutions. Other agreements remain on the institution level only.

Most of the agreements indicate that kindergarten and school administrators have overall responsibility for the implementation of practice training at the kindergarten and school, as well as for administrative tasks and coordination. Several of the agreements describe responsibilities and tasks on the kindergarten/school level, but not the specific distribution between teachers and administrators. In those cases in which the school administrators' responsibility for practice training is defined, a good training context in keeping with applicable regulations and guidelines is expected. We did not find the same requirements in the partnership agreements for kindergartens.

A number of agreements include requirements for annual evaluations of the partnership and a final evaluation in line with the intention, content and obligations of the agreement. One agreement contains a separate section on a joint evaluation of the practice training. Students are to evaluate the teacher education institution's practice preparations, partner school/kindergarten and practice training supervisors on completion of the placement and the practice training supervisors are to

evaluate the teacher education institution's preparations and implementation of the practice training.

Most agreements regulate the financing of the partnerships and contain descriptions of how the funding is to be used. A number of agreements specify that practice-related work is remunerated in accordance with other existing agreements or that the remuneration for the agreed scope of activities and calculation of time spent on various work tasks are specified in the appendix or applicable procedures and guidelines for agreements and remuneration.

The agreements also describe the time commitment for students and assistants who participate in various resource groups in the project. This is especially highlighted in those parts of the agreement concerning the fulfilment of the placement. The agreements define a minimum number of days for practice training for students and how they are distributed throughout the study period.

4.3 Assessment of content elements in partnership agreements

The Council obtained advice from the legal experts² at the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training about elements that should be included in a partnership agreement. Briefly summarised, the legal experts recommend that the following are included in a partnership agreement: introductory section with general information (background, objective, duration, loyalty obligation), division of responsibilities, administrative provisions, need for changes and termination of the agreement, notification and conflict resolution. The content of the various elements can be found in Appendix 2. Below is a summary of the Council's findings in the partnership agreements, taking into consideration the advice from the legal experts, the Knowledge Base, the Council's principles and dialogue with the sector.

The agreements analysed by the Council already contain a large number of content elements and a structure that, according to the legal experts, should be included, with a description of objectives, organisation and the responsibilities and tasks of the parties involved. Some descriptions are more extensive than others.

The agreements analysed by the Council appear to be based on a relationship of mutual dependence, respect, collaboration and equity. This is something that the Council also believes should be fostered by the agreements. In addition, the agreements should contain factors that support the further development of trust-based systems, promote local initiative and the willingness to innovate, as well as provide legal support/security to the parties in the partnership. The Council recommends that all agreements contain a general section describing the background and motivation for the collaboration, the partnership objective and duration, the obligations of the parties to actively contribute to achieving the objective of the agreement and preferably concrete measures. The four areas of cooperation presented in the Knowledge Base are a good starting point for a description of the partnership objective.

When it comes to the legal experts' recommendation to describe the division of responsibilities, some agreements outline a distribution of organisational and administrative burden, while several also mention such activities as R&D and competence development. In these descriptions, there is also a significant difference in the level of detail and only a few mention students. Most of the

² Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. Department of in-house legal services and private schools.

agreements mention allocated funding over a specific period of time and how the funding is to be managed and spent. According to the legal experts, ambiguity in the descriptions in the agreements can lead to conflict. The Council also feels it is important that the division of responsibilities is described in terms of the partnership goals and that the distribution of resources and allocation of time resources is specified.

In the description of the division of responsibilities, it appears as if the project managers at the teacher education institutions serve as a connecting link between the parties in the partnership. Some agreements also require the establishment of a steering group. The Council believes that a steering group should be established, consisting of representatives of all parties involved, such as practice training supervisors, kindergarten/school owner, management and staff at the teacher education institution and students.

When it comes to administrative provisions, most of the agreements contain sections pertaining to the active monitoring of the collaborative relationship, such as regular meetings between the partners. According to the advice from the legal experts, this, as well as sustainable meeting structures that align with the organisational structure of both parties, are important. The Council considers the relationship between the parties involved essential for the quality of the partnership (see the Knowledge Base and dialogue meetings, Chapter 5) and therefore recommends that the meeting structures are emphasised and specified in the agreements. The Council recommends scheduling regular meetings frequently enough to maintain and further develop the relationship and that the agreement describes the frameworks the parties believe are essential for this. The meetings should also facilitate academic discussions and expertise sharing and highlight the activities in the practice setting.

A number of agreements include a requirement for annual evaluations of the agreement, as well as a final evaluation. Only one teacher education institution has an agreement with a separate section on a joint evaluation of the practice training. The Council believes that the agreements should contain an interim and final evaluation, including a plan for both the formative and summative parts of the evaluation.

According to the legal experts, one of the greatest challenges, which can lead to conflict, pertains to the contractual obligations of the parties and a lack of active follow-up of the collaborative relationship. The legal experts therefore recommend that the partnership agreements specify the obligations of the parties and content of any progress plans, and that all interim changes/adjustments are agreed in writing between the contractual partners and added to the agreement as an appendix.

There is little mention of such themes as changes, discontinuation or termination of agreements in the partnership agreements. Over time, a need may arise to change, adapt or terminate an agreement. The legal experts recommend that changes to agreements be put in writing.

They also point out that it is important in an agreement to clarify what happens if the partners do not fulfil their obligations. The Council did not find any mention of this in the agreements we reviewed. Reference to conflict resolution, for example, should include information on the right to terminate the agreement in the event of a material breach and negotiations in the event of minor disagreements between the parties.

The Council recommends that the agreements provide a clear framework for creating quality as part of the collaboration and how cooperation in the partnership ensures the right of children and students to a high-quality education.

The agreements should also include mention of how the partners will work to achieve equity, shared ownership and a balance between them, so that all partners can leverage their unique expertise for the benefit of students and children.

The agreements should be designed to promote equal responsibility and the development of trust-based systems. It is important that the agreements do not lead to adverse formalisations, but promote innovation and the further development of the partnership.

The Council therefore recommends that the agreements are structured in a way that supports good communication between the teacher education programme and kindergarten/school and facilitates meeting places where the relationship and dedication can be developed and grow, as well as where the development needs of the field of practice are heard. It is also important that the partnership can be linked to other local quality development efforts and serve as a driver for the development of other practice kindergartens/schools and other kindergartens/schools in the region.

5 Dialogue meetings with owners and kindergarten and school leaders

In this report, the Council has supplemented the Knowledge Base by obtaining owner and management perspectives from kindergartens and schools in order to gain better insight into their experiences with partnerships – such as what they contribute, how they benefit and especially their thoughts on how partnership activities can be improved and developed further. The Council members therefore held five dialogue meetings in the course of February and March 2020 with a total of 17 kindergarten and school owners and 25 head teachers in kindergartens and school leaders with little or extensive experience with partnerships.

5.1 Content and structure of dialogue meetings

Dialogue meetings were held respectively in Tromsø, Trondheim, Rogaland/Western Norway (online meeting with three meeting locations), Kristiansand and Oslo. The participants were recruited through the Council members' regional network. In the invitation to participate in a dialogue meeting, the school and kindergarten owners and leaders were sent information on the Council, commissioned work on partnerships and purpose of the dialogue meeting beforehand (see Appendix 3).

The Council developed a joint procedure for the dialogue meetings in order to attain a nearly identical approach as possible and the meetings were primarily held according to the same model. A set of questions was also developed to be discussed during the dialogue meetings. The meetings were organised and held by the members of the Council. The dialogue content was recorded in detail and subsequently systematised and summarised by the Council members in collaboration with the secretariat. The dialogue summaries were reviewed and processed to ensure that they reflect the main points of the meetings as best as possible. The purpose of the dialogues was to secure owner and management perspectives in the Council's work on the mandate and participants with different partnership experiences were deliberately recruited. The Council's approach was inspired by various qualitative methods for obtaining experiences and viewpoints from a wide range of sector stakeholders. The Council listened to a number of individuals with partnership experiences from around the country. In processing the input from the meetings, the Council chose to summarise main points in the material, as well as include a few statements of importance for the Council's further considerations.

The invitation to the meetings included a set of questions that the Council wanted to discuss and obtain input on through two dialogues:

Dialogue 1: A general conversation about partnership observations and experiences, as well as the added value and equity of partnerships. Examples of questions:

- Why did you participate in a partnership and how did you approach this in practice?
- How did you collaborate with the other parties and what did you collaborate on?
- How did you benefit from the partnership as owners and leaders?

Since kindergartens, schools and teacher education programmes have different core tasks, there is a risk that kindergartens and schools largely become recipients instead of equal partners in partnerships. Examples of questions:

- What has been your experience with this?
- How does this affect the division of roles?
- What do you do to achieve equity and balance in your partnerships?

Dialogue 2: A conversation on three specific themes:

- Practice: Questions related to cooperation on practice training and how collaboration with the field of practice can strengthen the practice dimension of teacher education.
- Research and development work in kindergartens and schools: Questions related to the details of cooperation on R&D and other development efforts, such as the choice of R&D topics, different forms of collaboration and the link between partnership activities and efforts related to other types of competence development and development initiatives.
- Organisation: Questions related to the organisation of partnerships and teacher education kindergartens and schools, such as how teacher education kindergartens and schools are selected, the consequences for kindergartens and schools that do not participate in partnerships and partnership funding.

As elsewhere in this report, the Council also used the areas of cooperation from the Knowledge Base (p. 38) discussed in Chapter 3 in its descriptions of the dialogue meetings.

5.2 About collaboration in partnerships

The dialogue meeting participants expressed motivation to become a teacher education kindergarten or school and to be part of a partnership. They want to contribute to creating good teacher education and help cultivate competence development in kindergartens and schools. The participants described several advantages to being part of this type of partnership. Factors that emerged during all dialogue meetings were the significance of developing and sharing knowledge, co-creation and having a common arena for competence development. According to the participants, this can be achieved through, for example, research and development work, placements and dual positions. Their experiences showed that this type of collaboration brings kindergartens/schools and teacher education programmes closer together and gives them a common understanding of the challenges and important joint development areas. The participants pointed out that this is an important prerequisite for further developing a partnership. Several mentioned that they are proud to be a teacher education kindergarten or school.

a. Collaboration on study design and organisation

The participants described a clear organisation of the partnership with such structures as a steering group and working groups for the practical implementation of the practice training. Several participants emphasised that good structures are important to a successful partnership, with one participant expressing this as follows: *“Clear structures help ensure a clarification of expectations and reciprocity.”* Many stated that a clear description of tasks and roles is essential for good collaboration and a high-quality result.

The extent to which the owners are involved in partnership organisation varies. During some dialogue meetings, it became clear that the teacher education programmes collaborate directly with the teacher education kindergartens and schools without involvement on the ownership level. Several emphasised that to ensure good long-term solutions, it is important that the owner is involved in both the design and organisation of the partnership.

During several of the dialogue meetings, the participants from the kindergarten sector represented more recent partnerships. It became clear that the kindergartens and kindergarten teachers had little involvement in the organisation of the partnerships. It was also pointed out that partnerships should be organised so that the teacher education staff are present in the kindergartens to a greater degree.

b. Collaboration on student learning in different contexts

In general, partnerships with teacher education programmes on student learning activities have been productive. An example of this is that the practice training supervisor teaches on campus (at the teacher education institution) and remains involved in teaching and planning. Several participants also point out that the teachers at the teacher education kindergartens and schools undergo joint supervision training, an important part of development work at the individual kindergartens and schools. A few expressed concern about not having enough access to practice training supervisors and believe that such initiatives as collective supervision training can help increase the number of qualified practice training supervisors.

Several were in the starting phase when it comes to establishing dual positions. This was mentioned as a success criterion and that such positions in particular can strengthen the connection between the education students receive at the kindergarten and school and their on-campus education. This area is still under development and the fact that these positions are not currently permanent was mentioned as a challenge.

The participants were largely concerned about the possibility to earn a Master's degree in teacher education. They considered this an opportunity for schools to acquire new expertise. But concern was also expressed about the work on Master's theses leading to extreme 'popularity' of the schools. An overview from the teacher education programme or a 'pool' of themes for Master's theses is also desired to facilitate preparation of a comprehensive implementation plan. The goal is to give both schools and teacher education programmes an overview that makes it easier to carry out the work and can make Master's theses more relevant and practice-related.

c. Collaboration on R&D and kindergarten/school development

It became clear during the dialogue meetings that R&D is an important part of partnerships, as it offers opportunities to develop new competencies in kindergartens and schools. Several participants stated that at the start of the collaboration, R&D work was often initiated by the teacher education programme and that this programme was also in charge of content. This has since changed. Also mentioned was the importance of involving the owners more closely in the initiatives and prioritising research topics, saying that they are now more actively involved in planning R&D projects than in the past. This has resulted in a greater sense of relevance and a boost to teacher motivation. Teachers also experience that this provides value in their daily work with children and young people. According to the participants, early involvement also helps create equity in the collaboration. Several were concerned about elevating R&D work from the individual to the system level, so that the needs of kindergartens, schools and their owners are also met.

During one of the dialogue meetings, the owners pointed out that working with research can seem alienating. The reason is that this is a domain that traditionally falls under the responsibility of teacher education programmes, making it important that this work be elevated to a system level where the owners can actively help define the contents of R&D initiatives. They also expressed a need to systematise the work in order to gain a complete overview of the projects that have been launched and work that has been done in the past. An important reason given was that this makes it easier for kindergartens and school to access results and relevant research literature.

The participants had different experiences when it comes to sharing experiences from participation in partnerships with other kindergartens/schools. A few provided examples of good solutions and experiences with competence sharing, while others pointed out that this is challenging, not only in terms of sharing with other kindergartens and schools in the municipality, but also internally within the teacher education programme. In this context, several mentioned a regional scheme for competence development in kindergartens (ReKomp) and a decentralised scheme for competence development in schools (DeKomp) as possible arenas for experience and competence sharing.

d. Actual organisation of partnership in relation to the practice aspects of the study

The dialogue meetings made clear that cooperation on placements is a key element of all partnerships. The participants emphasised that this collaboration must be obligatory for all parties. Several stressed that the establishment of teacher education kindergartens and schools has led to more *professional placements and increased quality of placements*. They also highlighted the importance of establishing a culture of sharing, especially since testing results and exemplary practice activities at teacher education kindergartens and schools can be shared with other practice kindergartens and schools in the municipality.

5.3 About equity and resources in partnerships

During the dialogue meetings, there was also mention of important factors that do not naturally fall into only one of the areas of cooperation. These are first and foremost factors associated with equity in partnerships and with time and resources.

Equity

Equity was a theme that was discussed during all dialogue meetings. A few owners stated that there does not necessarily have to be complete equity in all areas, but enough to maintain a balance. They mentioned that kindergartens/schools and teacher education programmes all have different tasks to perform and must focus on their core activities. Several also provided examples of how equity in their partnerships has developed through working on and engaging in dialogue about common development areas related to R&D and the implementation of practice training. Also stated was the importance of avoiding an orderer and supplier situation when it comes to, for example, R&D work and themes for student teachers' Master's theses. The importance of collaboration and quality was also highlighted, as well as appreciation of each others' expertise. This makes it possible to create an arena for a professional community with kindergartens, schools and teacher educators as its members.

Time and resources

Time and resources for the work was considered a challenge. The participants pointed out that financing from teacher education programmes is primarily used to fund these initiatives. Several also

mentioned that financial incentives should be directed towards the field of practice. Predictability and a long-term perspective when it comes to funding were highlighted as important in order to, for example, plan the use of human resources better over time. Continuity was also mentioned as a success factor, with one participant stating that *“for this to work, it is important that the same individuals participate in these initiatives over time”*.

The participants also pointed out that kindergartens and schools have different terms for partnership participation. Kindergarten staff members have less flexibility in terms of time planning, which can be challenging if partnership-related activities require that the kindergarten staff leave the kindergarten.

5.4 Input for the Advisory Council for Teacher Education in Norway

In conclusion, the participants were encouraged during the meetings to provide the Council with input concerning the regulating of overall responsibilities, roles and tasks in partnerships: *“What are the pros and cons of such regulation? Do you see other ways to regulate this?”* (see Appendix 3).

Opinions on the regulation of partnerships differed during the dialogue meetings. Some of the participants believed that partnerships should be regulated through legislation in order to prevent significant differences in organisation and structure. This also had to do with ensuring clearer coordination of partnerships in municipalities, for example, where there are several types of teacher education schools and kindergartens affiliated with different teacher education institutions. Another argument in favour of regulation was based on a desire to legitimise accountability as a practice school owner. In that context, it was specified that regulation should not involve additional costs, but that *a regulation stipulates that funding is made available for implementation*. It was also pointed out that if the partnership were to be regulated, this must not be at the cost of existing diversity or lead to the loss of important local innovations. In addition, if partnerships were to be regulated, this should apply to all parties: the teacher education programme and the kindergarten/school owners.

During other dialogue meetings, participants expressed a more sceptical attitude towards regulation. Questions were raised about, for instance, who the partnership should be regulated for: the teacher education programme and/or the owner? It was specified that collaboration should not be imposed and as one participant put it, *“a forced marriage serves no purpose”*. These participants did not believe in regulated successful collaboration and stated that partnerships are about *“long-term and hard work”*.

Apart from the issue of regulation, a desire was expressed for partnership guidelines and frameworks, and that this should be a national responsibility. The participants pointed out that guiding principles can be a good alternative to regulations and that it is positive to highlight prototypes and examples. Digital arenas and experiencing sharing were also mentioned as beneficial.

5.5 Summary

A review of the dialogue meetings confirms previous findings on diversity and variation in partnerships. This applies to both organisation and the thematic areas of the collaboration.

However, the dialogue meeting participants agreed that partnerships are a significant arena for knowledge development and sharing. They also stated that the work has contributed to developing a common understanding of challenges and important joint development areas.

- When it comes to cooperation on study design and organisation, the participants stated that in partnerships, the main emphasis is on organisation. Cooperation on study design, such as programme and subject plans, was mentioned to a lesser degree during the dialogue meetings.
- What some did express was a desire for good collaboration on student learning activities. One factor they mentioned as better facilitating this type of cooperation is the establishment of dual positions. The challenges mentioned included pressure on kindergartens and schools in relation to student Bachelor and Master's theses.
- Cooperation on R&D and kindergarten/school development is an important element of partnerships. One of the challenges highlighted was the sharing of expertise with other kindergartens and schools. Several questioned how partnership activities can be linked more closely to kindergarten and school development, such as in the ReKomp and DeKomp schemes.
- When it comes to the actual organisation in partnerships of the practice aspects of teacher education, the participants stated that the establishment of teacher education kindergartens and schools has led to more professional placements and a higher quality of placements.

6 Assessment of the need for regulations and other measures

In this chapter, the Council discusses the commissioned work in view of the Knowledge Base and what we now know based on the principles, partnership agreements and dialogue with the sector. The Council considers it essential that tools that promote partnership in the form of collaboration between teacher education programmes and kindergartens and schools aim to promote quality in teacher education and in schools and kindergartens. The Council stresses that tools and measures aimed at promoting quality must reinforce the principles of partnership collaboration (see Chapter 3).

6.1 Current legislation, regulations and national guidelines

As shown in Chapter 4, the emergence of teacher education kindergartens and schools is based on agreements between teacher education programmes and kindergarten and school owners or between kindergartens and schools. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of these agreements is how they differ in terms of what they regulate and how they regulate this.

Variation *may* be connected to what the Council pointed out in the Knowledge Base, namely that partnerships between teacher education programmes and the field of practice are not enshrined in any special legislation or regulations. What *is* laid down in law pertains primarily to practice training/studies, which are part of but far from all that should be included in a partnership between a teacher education, kindergarten and school.

The framework plans for teacher education programmes are regulations that help safeguard the quality of teacher education programmes by defining framework, content, organisation and learning outcomes on graduation. The framework plans also specify that national guidelines for teacher education programmes are prepared or to be prepared. These guidelines must be developed in close collaboration between the academic community, school and kindergarten, and be dynamic documents that are developed and modified as needed³. With regard to practice studies, the guidelines specify that *“the teacher education institution must work together with professionals in the field of practice to facilitate a placement situation that is consistent and coherent. After graduating, the candidates should have a foundation for professional practice based on academic and experience-based knowledge”* (Universities Norway–Teacher Education, 2018a, p. 1).

There is currently little mention of partnerships in the national guidelines. However, a few guidelines contain formulations that deal with partnerships as a theme, such as that the *“agreement on practice studies is entered into between the education institution and kindergarten owner. The parties are to establish a long-term and compulsory partnership on practice studies and the content of the education”* (Universities Norway–Teacher Education, 2018b, p. 10). However, the national guidelines for secondary school teacher education (grades 8-13) differ from the guidelines for other education programmes in that they discuss partnerships in more detail (Universities Norway–Teacher Education, 2017, p. 6-7). They specify that the institutions, in collaboration with school owners and administrators, are responsible for establishing a compulsory partnership of equals. The collaboration must be linked to R&D work in the teacher education programme and school and contribute to collaboration on students’ R&D assignments. Dual positions, staff exchanges and

³ <https://www.uhr.no/temasider/nasjonale-retningslinjer/nasjonale-retningslinjer-for-larerutdanningene/>

research collaboration are mentioned as examples of the focus of partnerships. Also stated is that partnerships must involve collaboration relating to practice training. Requirements for educational institutions and practice schools are mentioned in particular, such as by specifying competence requirements for teachers at schools in this type of partnership with teacher education programmes.

In terms of legislation and regulations for the field of practice, neither the Kindergarten Act nor Education Act contains guidelines on partnerships with teacher education programmes. The Kindergarten Act regulates the obligation of owners to make the kindergarten available for practice training for students undergoing kindergarten teacher training (2005, §24). The Education Act does not regulate this, but includes the possibility to instruct municipalities to contribute to student practice training (1998, §10-7).

6.2 Ongoing parallel processes that can affect current legislation, regulations and governance

In addition to examining the currently applicable regulations, the Council also reviewed ongoing parallel processes that *can* result in a change to the current regulations or influence the management of teacher education programmes. The processes highlighted in this report were chosen based on their relevance for the Council's mandate. These are:

- *University and University College Committee activities*
- *Work related to the White Paper on governance policies for state universities and university colleges*
- *The international advisory group for primary and lower secondary teacher educational work*
- *Work related to the White Paper on work relevance*
- *Education Act Committee activities*

6.2.1 Ongoing processes pertaining to the governance of the university and university college sector

University and University College Committee

In June 2018, the Ministry of Education and Research established the University and University College Committee, which was commissioned to review the regulations for universities and university colleges. The reason included a desire to establish regulations that clearly describe responsibilities, rights and obligations, and which are not more extensive than necessary.⁴ The committee submitted its Official Norwegian Report (NOU 2020:3) containing recommendations for new university and university college legislation in February 2020. The bill is based on the same principles as current legislation, including the principle of institutional autonomy. The committee believes that the governance of universities and university colleges *“should generally be reduced and that the institutions should coordinate to a greater extent and set priorities that meet societal needs”* (NOU 2020:3, p. 45). The report also points out that the *“central government’s overall governance over the university and university college sector is currently extensive and this can negatively impact the possibilities of universities and university colleges to develop their activities in the long term”*

⁴Ministry of Education and Research. (2018). *Simplification and improvement of frameworks for universities and university colleges (Forenkling og forbedring av rammeverket for universiteter og høyskoler)*. <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/3c8d033672c146868dcbb545b847aff5/innspill-til-arbeidet-med-gjennomgang-av-regelverket-og-malstrukturen-fo...pdf>

(NOU 2020:3, p. 83). The Committee also recommends that the government ensure equality between institutions through framework plan-based governance of a number of education programmes, including teacher education, yet also mentions that this governance should not be more detailed than necessary (NOU 2020:3, p. 87). In its response, Universities Norway states, among other things, that it is content with a common law for higher educational institutions, but at the same time, emphasises that “degrees of freedom should be given, so that the special focal areas of the individual institutions can be strengthened and societal needs met as best as possible” within the confines of the law⁵.

White Paper on governance policies for state universities and university colleges

The government has reported that a white paper is to be prepared on governance policies for state universities and university colleges, due for completion in spring 2021. The report should be viewed in the context of work on the new University and University College Act. To encourage a broad and open debate, the Ministry of Education and Research invited various stakeholders to provide input on good governance of universities and university colleges.⁶ The Ministry also challenged five select individuals with extensive experience from the university and university college sector⁷ to share their thoughts on governance. They collectively pointed out such challenges as micromanagement, overly bureaucratic management and little confidence in university and university college institutions in general in connection with sector management⁸.

International advisory group for primary and lower secondary teacher education (APT)

In spring 2020, the Advisory Panel for Teacher Education (APT) submitted its recommendations (NOKUT, 2020). These include less micromanagement of primary and lower secondary teacher education and a temporary reform ‘pause’, so that several cohorts of students can complete their education before it is evaluated. When it comes to partnerships between teacher education programmes and schools, the group recommends evaluating current partnership agreements, agreeing on joint principles, avoiding unilateral approaches and top-down non-financed mandates, providing funding and tools for local partnership and holding partnerships jointly accountable for the quality of teacher education (NOKUT, 2020, p. 7 and 8). It is particularly relevant in this context to note that the group recommends providing funding for school/municipal partnerships involved in teacher education partnerships in order to act as “genuinely equal partners” (NOKUT, 2020, p. 8).

White Paper on work relevance

In spring 2021, the Ministry of Education and Research will submit a white paper on work relevance in higher education. The report pertains to higher education in general and not specifically to teacher

⁵ Statement from Universities Norway to NOU 2020:3 New Act relating to Universities and University Colleges, p. 1. Retrieved from <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/57997e33f4e74b2dbf917fae83ec4f04/universitets-og-hogskoleradet.pdf?uid=Universitets-og-hogskoleradet>

⁶ Ministry of Education and Research, Feb. 2020. Invitation to provide input on good governance of universities and university colleges. Retrieved from <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/d3554af33f954aba9f7d0eafbc277f1c/innsfillsbrev.pdf>

⁷ The five individuals are Gunnar Bovim, Åse Gornitzka, Lise Iversen Kulbrandstad, Klaus Mohn and Jonas Stein, retrieved from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/hva-er-god-styring-av-statlige-universiteter-og-hoyskoler/id2691015/>

⁸ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/hva-er-god-styring-av-statlige-universiteter-og-hoyskoler/id2691015/> Universities Norway is not represented in the group, but its input for the report includes the discontinuation of framework plans for professional education and phasing out of detailed and mandatory guidelines. They also pointed out that when collaborating with specialist communities, “more mandatory guidelines for collaboration between institutions and the workplace” should be considered (University Norway’s input for the impending white paper on governance of the university and university college sector, p. 8), see <https://innsyn.uhr.no/wfdocument.ashx?journalpostid=2020000453&dokid=43703&versjon=1&variant=A&>

education. It includes an ambition to strengthen quality and work relevance in higher education, especially in view of society's future development and realignment needs. Through the role of universities and university colleges as both a supplier of services and contributor to the community, the aim is to strengthen *"cooperation between universities and university colleges and the workplace on society's need for knowledge, the development of higher education and student learning"*⁹. This is interesting in terms of the Council's mandate because the report can result in measures that may also affect institution initiatives addressing teacher education kindergartens and schools and because it corroborates that teacher education partnership initiatives should also be viewed in the context of general and other initiatives with work relevance in the university and university college sector, as well as in terms of employment.

6.2.2 Ongoing processes pertaining to the governance of the field of practice through regulations

Regulations for primary and lower secondary education have also been recently reviewed. The Education Act Committee submitted its Official Norwegian Report in December 2019 and states, among other things, that regulations pertaining to primary and lower secondary education are perceived by different user groups as too sweeping and confusing, that they fall short of the mark and that they are difficult to comprehend (NOU 2019:23, p. 19). According to the Committee, the regulations do not have the intended effectiveness. The Committee pointed out that municipalities feel that they are too strictly controlled in the area of education and that this can have consequences for their quality development efforts, such as in terms of requirements related to documentation, reporting and systems, as well as priorities (NOU 2019:23, p. 19). The Committee has focused on finding a balance between ensuring regulations that guarantee the highest possible degree of conformity and equity in education and offering enough flexibility to enable school owners, teachers and students to find the best way to arrive at a common goal for primary and lower secondary education (NOU 2019:23, p. 20).

Relevant for the Council's work are the Committee's proposal to eliminate §10-7 from the Education Act. This section pertains to placements at schools and in individual cases or in regulations, allows for the ministry to *"order municipalities or county authorities to provide university and university college students with practice training and guidance in schools, and to select a person to be responsible for such practice training"* (1998, §10-7). The reason for the proposal is that it is in the self-interest of municipalities that more teachers enter the profession and they are expected to help train new teachers without this being a task that is imposed on them. The Committee also points out that they are not aware of this being enforced. In its response¹⁰, the Union of Education Norway commented that this sanction should be updated and adjusted, and that there is a need to highlight collaboration between the teaching profession, municipalities/county councils and teacher education in legislation. They also pointed out that collaboration between the teaching profession, municipalities/city councils and teacher education programmes should be encouraged through such incentives as grants for schools and teacher education programmes and competence-enhancing measures in schools. Universities Norway has not provided input for the new Education Act. In its hearing statement, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) does not comment directly on the

⁹ Retrieved from <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/om-arbeidsrelevansmeldingen/id2638895/>

¹⁰<https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/4f328f3395474cbe9a322dfe96b20598/utdanningsforbundet.pdf?uid=Utdanningsforbundet>

proposal to remove §10-7. The Ministry of Education and Research has stated that it intends to submit a comprehensive consultation memorandum with the government's proposal for the new Education Act in spring 2021.

6.2.3 Council's interpretation of ongoing processes

As the Council sees it, there is a general perception on the ongoing parallel processes of the need for:

- Governance on a different and partly less detailed level
- Greater flexibility

At the same time, there is a need for greater relevance in what is regulated. Conformity and equity are principles that are emphasised by both committees and the importance of which the Council also discussed in Chapter 3.

6.3 Assessment of the pros and cons of regulatory requirements and other measures

This subchapter initially presents arguments that have been important for the Council's assessments of the need to regulate partnerships. The Council subsequently expresses its perspectives in a general discussion of regulatory requirements. The assessments are based on our current governance system involving framework plans and national guidelines for teacher education programmes.

Based on the awareness that the goal for partnership initiatives is ambitious and requires a complex approach, the Council has assessed various tools that can support partnership efforts.

For the recommendations to have as great an impact as possible on partnership efforts, the assessments are based on the four areas of cooperation used throughout the Knowledge Base and in this report: collaboration on study design and organisation, collaboration on student learning activities in different contexts, collaboration on R&D and kindergarten/school development and the actual organisation of partnerships in relation to the practice aspects of the study.

6.3.1 Legislation, framework plans and national guidelines

The Council recognises that there are a number of pros and cons to regulating partnership initiatives. The pros involve a desire to achieve *fairness and equity* in kindergarten, school and educational opportunities, which the Council believes would benefit from regulation. Safeguarding the rights of children young people and students in kindergartens, schools and teacher education is another criterion the Council believes constitutes the basis for partnership initiatives, regardless of the future management of the development process (see the principles in Chapter 3). In the Council's opinion, regulatory requirements can be an appropriate measure to *achieve a higher degree of equality and reduce unintended differences between teacher education programmes*. This is an observation the Council believes aligns with views of the University and University College Committee.

Governance through regulatory frameworks can also help ensure more permanent and sustainable collaboration structures beyond what can be achieved with individual projects and short-term initiatives. This would most likely facilitate the establishment and implementation of permanent cooperation organisations, such as steering groups, councils and committees, as collaborative structures. In this respect, regulations can contribute to *continuity* in partnerships between teacher

education programmes and the field of practice in developing teacher education. The Council believes that continuity is necessary to develop a robust partnership that can promote quality work over time. Continuity through regulatory requirements can also be ensured through *government funding for implementing legal requirements*. Regulation can also contribute to *highlighting the role of kindergartens and schools as arenas for teacher education*. This can lead to a clearer recognition of the knowledge and expertise of the field of practice as an essential part of teacher education.

Arguments against regulation include concerns about how this will affect the *autonomy and trust* underlying the sectors. The Knowledge Base and dialogue meetings (see Chapter 5) show that autonomy and trust are important for ownership of partnership initiatives. Local flexibility is essential to develop partnerships with a genuine impact (see the principles in Chapter 3). This especially applies to developing robust ‘third space’ collaboration (see the detailed description in Chapter 5 of the Knowledge Base). Norway is known for being a society with a high level of trust and amplified national control might be perceived as breaking with this culture and, consequently, could lead to undesirable and unintended results. In the opinion of the Council, a key issue in partnership initiatives is to determine what is needed for the parties to desire and see the relevance of entering into a partnership to achieve both their own and common goals. This is also substantiated in the Knowledge Base, which points out challenges often revolve around “*how common goals, interest and relevance can be developed and established among those involved in the partnership*” (Knowledge Base, p.70).

Regulation in light of challenges in the four areas of cooperation

The Council also assessed the possibility to regulate partnership activities on a level that makes it possible to overcome challenges associated with the four areas of cooperation discussed throughout this report:

- Collaboration on study design and organisation
- Collaboration on implementation of studies
- Collaboration on R&D and kindergarten/school development
- Collaboration on organisation of practice training

We envisage an obligation for institutions to establish steering groups or reference groups with kindergarten teachers, teachers, owners and students that focus not only on the planning of the academic year, but also on implementation during the process, in order to ensure relevance and quality in the education. This type of obligation can help strengthen the partnership’s *collaboration on study design and organisation*, especially if it requires steering groups. However, steering groups and reference groups can end up performing a ‘monitoring function’, while reference groups can have a limited impact. In this respect, there is a risk that these kinds of measures will be unable to safeguard the principle of equity. Another challenge might be that reference groups in particular can have a reduced impact, given that the organisation of teacher education programmes is largely coordinated on the national level and because staff and room challenges, etc. require predictability.

Another possibility might be to make it mandatory for the institutions themselves, for example through their work involving national guidelines, to prepare joint overall structures for collaboration on organisation and study design. This can be done, for instance, by identifying needs and challenges, concrete measures for cooperation, and so on. This in turn would make it possible to maintain a certain level of local flexibility because the teacher education programmes themselves would define

what should be common for all programmes, equivalent to Universities Norway–Teacher Education activities.

In terms of *collaboration on implementation of the study*, this can be done in several ways. One way might be to regulate the percentage of staff members and/or different types of competencies in different types of positions in teacher education programmes, such as dual positions, staff exchanges or public sector PhD positions for teachers. This is a measure that can help strengthen contact between staff on campus and at kindergarten/schools by facilitating joint arenas. However, it also has elements that can become, or might be perceived as being, rigid schemes because requirements must be met without necessarily responding to actual needs.

To encourage the use of expertise from the field of practice on campus and vice versa, the Council has also discussed the use of national guidelines, different descriptions in teacher education framework plans and work requirements in education programmes. Such descriptions and requirements can have a direct impact on the quality of the education and knowledge forms and, as a result, can be more effective than, for example, competence requirements. A challenge with this type of measure is that it quickly becomes too detailed and/or imprecise.

When it comes to regulating *collaboration on R&D* through framework plans for teacher education programmes, this could affect the autonomy of the institutions to a significant degree. Consequently, this type of measure might be perceived as a violation of trust in the system. Another approach might be to further *strengthen* the R&D element of the University and University College Act to require that all teaching in Norwegian higher education be research-based (2005, §1-3). This could help strengthen the link between the institutions' R&D work to student learning activities even more. However, this kind of measure might easily be perceived as forced. It may also contribute to constricting and reducing autonomy in R&D projects.

Using Education Act or Kindergarten Act provisions to strengthen the influence of kindergartens and schools by, for example, regulating their participation in R&D in partnerships might also be problematic. At any rate, it would involve a limited number of kindergartens and schools. It would also involve regulation on a level of detail that is not desirable considering the principle of local flexibility. In the opinion of the Council, with such a level of specificity, it would be more beneficial to promote voluntary partnerships through various incentives.

Collaboration on *organisation of practice training* can also be regulated through, for example, clarification in framework plans for teacher education and provisions in the Education Act and Kindergarten Act. For example, the mission of the various practice arenas and contribution of teacher education kindergartens and schools in particular can be regulated. However, the Council questions whether this level of regulation is appropriate for stimulating innovation on practice training in the partnerships that involve teacher education kindergartens and schools.

[Council's perspective in a general discussion of regulation](#)

All in all, the Council considers it neither appropriate nor realistic to attempt to achieve perceived equity between partners in partnership through regulatory requirements. Besides, partnership guidelines already exist. The Council therefore believes there is a need to ensure the establishment and development of partnerships through a number of general common frameworks and guidelines.

Such common frameworks should include an expectation of partnership formations related to the institutions' regular core tasks in already existing regulations.

The need for a certain minimum of common frameworks and guidelines in teacher education is supported by the recommendation of the University and University College Committee to ensure some level of equality between the programmes through framework plans.

The framework plans for the various teacher education programmes are provisions of the University and University College Act and in the opinion of the Council, clearly perform a governing function for the programme frameworks and content. Managing partnership initiatives through framework plans for teacher education programmes could therefore help ensure *structural and systematic* equality among programmes. However, managing through teacher education framework plans will only require the commitment of the one party in the partnerships – teacher education programmes – and not kindergarten or school owners. Regulating partnerships through framework plans alone can therefore enhance the imbalance referred to earlier by the Council in the relationship between teacher education programmes, owners, schools and kindergartens. The Council therefore also discussed different possibilities to entrench a provision in the current regulations for kindergartens and schools to ensure a better balance and quality and accountability in and for partnerships. Chapter 13 of the Education Act and §24 of the Kindergarten Act have been mentioned, but this is a complex legal issue and the Council believes it requires further study.

Regulatory requirements may also entail a form of governance that is not necessarily conducive to development processes in that this would limit local flexibility. As the Council pointed out earlier, overly detailed guidelines for how collaboration in partnerships must be structured and organised would interfere with the shared ownership referred to by the Council in the Knowledge Base as necessary to create involvement and a sense of community in development work. This is echoed in the recommendations from the dialogue meetings, where participants expressed concerns about imposing collaboration and guidelines because this could negatively affect diversity. In its partnership recommendations, the international advisory group APT also expressed scepticism about unilateral top-down mandates.

By extension, the Council believes there is a need for a solid knowledge base that underscores the importance of teacher education kindergartens and schools and that ensures the sustainable further development of quality in teacher education and the teaching profession. Although the Knowledge Centre's research review of placements in teacher education programmes is an important supplement to such a knowledge base (Munthe, Ruud & Malmo, 2020), the Council wants to add that the arrangement with teacher education kindergartens and schools is relatively new and still under development. The Council therefore wishes to add that linking overly rigid governance mechanisms to partnership arrangements can limit local initiative and local development work. The Council also considers it problematic to regulate local capacity to identify local needs or solve local challenges. Any regulation of partnerships should therefore reflect a broadly supported understanding of the importance of collaboration and coordination of quality work between teacher education programmes, schools and kindergartens (see Chapter 3).

The Council's views on regulatory requirements, however, depend on addressing the challenges mentioned in the Knowledge Base and this report using supplementary tools that can support the development of partnerships.

6.3.2 Tools related to financing, guidance and support

The Council is concerned about whether the tools used have a genuine impact on partnership initiatives. The Council believes there is significant potential in strengthening dialogue with the kindergarten and school sector and students, especially dialogue on study relevance and foundation in the field of practice. In the Knowledge Base and description of the dialogue meetings, the Council mentions the risk of kindergartens and schools becoming recipients instead of participants in partnerships, and that partnerships are often at the initiative, responsibility and terms of the teacher education programme. Reasons for this may be the differences in the core tasks of the kindergartens, schools and teacher education, as well as the perceived relevance of the collaboration.

Financial incentives

The Knowledge Base shows that teacher education programmes that have been granted funding from the Ministry of Education and Research to develop a partnership have established collaborations with teacher education schools to a greater extent than programmes without such support. This may explain why teacher education school initiatives have progressed further than those involving teacher education kindergartens, for which funding was not granted from the Ministry of Education and Research until 2019. The Knowledge Base also shows that it is not necessarily considerable funding that is needed to stimulate partnership development, but that predictability is extremely important. It is important to note in this context that funding from the Ministry of Education and Research has been granted to teacher education programmes and not kindergartens or schools. The Council therefore questions whether funding aimed at partnerships in which kindergarten or school owners are co-applicants and recipients of funding together with teacher education institutions can encounter challenges related to equity, scalability and capacity, among other factors.

Earmarked funds for partnerships can safeguard national interests and guidelines, while also supporting local initiatives and adaptations. It is therefore worth asking whether earmarked funds can be a more effective tool for strengthening partnerships than governance through regulations alone. In this case, it is important that guidelines accompanying funds do not restrict local flexibility.

To address challenges related to equity and the genuine participation of all parties in the partnership, an important prerequisite would be that all parties must contribute to be eligible for funding. This applies to activities related to *organisation and study design*, for instance, to which teacher education programmes have traditionally had a higher degree of ownership. It would also be important to maintain a long-term perspective in order to create permanent structures for collaboration on organisation and study design and a more short-term perspective that supports more innovative processes that can generate new innovations.

Increased *collaboration on student learning activities* can trigger the need for external funding, especially if additional efforts beyond regular operations are needed during the establishment phase. For example, practice training with an increased focus on interaction between campus and the kindergarten or school can be resource-intensive for both parties. The principle of predictable financing is especially important for effectively planning and managing the use of resources. This was also brought up during the dialogue meetings.

Long-term funding measures can give partnerships predictability and enable effective resource planning, which in turn can help overcome challenges associated with capacity building and sustainability over time. The Council is aware of positive experiences at various locations with, for

example, combination positions in which teacher educators have a part-time position at a university or university college and a part-time position at a school or kindergarten.

To maintain development-oriented and knowledge-based collaboration, short-term innovative initiatives may also be relevant. Variation among the different teacher training programmes, kindergartens and schools, however, dictates that the institutions have different collaboration possibilities, something that should be taken into account in an external funding model.

Both long-term and short-term financing measures in which funding is specially earmarked for partnership activities may also require mandatory agreements that give both parties the possibility to have a say in which measures are to be prioritised.

The need for a long-term perspective could also be met to some degree through basic funding, which would provide predictability and support within the institutions. However, it is difficult to imagine basic funding for kindergartens and schools/owners for this purpose and the Council questions whether funding measures that only target teacher education programmes would contribute enough to ensure equity among partners.

Other forms of financial incentive that might have an effect on collaboration in partnership include the use of research programmes (for example, through the Research Council of Norway), which can encourage teacher education programmes to enter into long-term partnerships with the field of practice. Earmarking funding for public sector PhDs for teachers in kindergartens and schools may also be a way to involve the field of practice in determining the topic of research, especially if positions are linked to collaboration projects. To ensure pertinence and practice relevance in joint R&D projects, an alternative might be to establish initiatives to which partnerships can apply jointly. The use of steering or reference groups can also contribute to this.

Other tools might be frameworks for how R&D time is spent, such as by requiring that research and/or development work contribute to the development of teacher education practice and cooperation. Alternatively, funding can be earmarked for subject teachers at universities and university colleges for direct professional interaction with kindergartens or schools and vice versa. Yet there is still a question of whether such measures would be sufficient in the long term to encourage collaboration on R&D work. Moreover, the Council is sceptical about arrangements that interfere considerably with the flexibility of institutions in terms of how R&D time is spent.

Short-term grant schemes that encourage and enable financial flexibility for local trials or pilots of collaboration forms may also be a way to encourage more collaboration. In this case, it would be important to require the sharing and communication of the activities and their results when allocating such funding, so that other practice kindergartens and schools can also take part in the knowledge being developed.

In general, it can be said that arrangements that require an application for funding can affect the collaboration and dialogue between the teacher education programme and kindergarten/school in a different way than arrangements in which funding is channelled directly to teacher education programmes and/or kindergartens and schools without an application, such as by requiring the involvement of both parties before funding is granted.

Other support and guidance resources

In the Council's view, the significant variation in role, responsibility, task and goal descriptions in partnerships should be met with resources that acknowledge the importance of local flexibility.

The use of advisors and other support resources can motivate local development initiatives, while at the same time providing direction and frameworks for partnerships with teacher education kindergartens and schools. Advisors and support tools can help highlight the general expectation that partnerships engage in dialogue on, for example, vision formulations, programme and subject plans, organisation of teaching and practice, various steering groups, councils and committees, etc. in teacher education programmes.

Meeting places, networks and time for dialogue could also encourage the development of partnerships. On the national level, relevant meeting places might be, for example, the Knowledge Parliament¹¹, where professional issues with relevance for kindergartens, schools and teacher education can be discussed in order to identify the need for and strengthen a joint knowledge base. These types of tools and resources can also be used regionally or locally, such as in combination with different forms of learning networks with a focus on sharing experiences with teaching partnerships or professional resource tools as sources of inspiration. Moreover, this would provide genuine freedom of action to adapt the work to other local measures, prerequisites or needs, which may be necessary to build a system that is sustainable over time.

Meeting places, advisors and guidelines can provide frameworks for interaction and encourage the prioritising of partnership activities by management, especially if combined with funding. Meeting places and networks can then be used for continuing efforts to create a better balance between the experiences of students in teacher education programmes and during placements. These types of tools can serve as inspiration and motivate collaboration in the form of, for example, dual positions and staff exchanges.

In the Council's discussions on tools and resources, topics included the content specifics for partnership agreements. Informative content in agreements can encourage the desired development, while at the same time supporting the importance of local flexibility. It can also serve as a concrete means to solve various types of challenges that can arise in a partnership. Such content specifics for agreements can also be a useful tool for spreading knowledge and good examples without this overriding or becoming too invasive in relation to local prerequisites, terms and equally as important, involvement. Informative content specifics for agreements can also motivate academia, kindergarten/school, owners and students to establish meeting places for dialogue on students' Master's theses and, to some extent, Bachelor's theses, such as about the need for knowledge with relevance for the profession.

Special focus on students in teacher education kindergartens or schools

Teacher Education 2025 aims to ensure that all students have access to a teacher education kindergarten or school in the course of their studies. An operationalisation of this can, for example, be linked to practice studies/training, trial activities or Bachelor's and Master's theses. In this context, it might also be relevant to mention that the international advisory panel APT (NOKUT,

¹¹ Retrieved from <https://www.uv.uio.no/proted/aktuelt/arrangementer/kunnskapsparlament-2016.html>

2020) recommends “*aspiring for all student teachers to spend a significant part of their practice training at schools with a comprehensive and genuine partnership with teacher education institutions*” (p. 8). In the Council’s view, the goal in *Teacher Education 2025* regarding student access to teacher education kindergartens and schools can be difficult to achieve in the short term and may require verifiable delimitation of what a teacher education kindergarten/school is. This would also require a substantial scaling up of the number of teacher education kindergartens and schools, which the Council believes is unrealistic and inappropriate in the short term. Moreover, it is still not known whether teacher education programmes will have the capacity to collaborate sufficiently with the number of teacher education kindergartens and schools that such a scaling up would require.

The Knowledge Base, review of agreements and dialogue meetings show that nearly all partnerships collaborate on R&D and/or kindergarten and school development and that the role of students in this collaboration is not clear from the material. Whether or not this is because R&D activities linked to the students’ education are not understood within the context of other development work or other topics were emphasised in the scoping study is not clear. The Council believes that teacher education programmes, kindergartens, schools and students would benefit from incorporating student Master’s and Bachelor’s theses in kindergarten teacher education into research projects that are clearly based in the field of practice. Partnerships are good arenas for collaboration on student theses based on practice, such as through umbrella projects that include several theses. To achieve the necessary impact on students’ total learning experience, ownership must be secured among subject teachers and practice training supervisors. Student theses could then encourage collaboration within and between teacher education programmes, kindergarten/school owners and students. However, a challenge here is that these types of measures can be vague and lead to a lack of mutual obligations.

6.4 Council recommendations

In assessing partnerships, it became clear to the Council that collaboration between teacher education programmes, kindergartens and schools is a complex subject area that requires a broad approach and that there are good arguments both for and against the use of regulations and other types of tools to strengthen these initiatives. However, throughout the entire process, the Council persistently held on to the goal of creating *quality* for a professional community and the principles for good collaboration in partnerships served as guidelines in this work.

In its recommendations, the Council emphasises what it considers most important to support the development of partnerships and that is keeping with the principles for partnership in light of the vision for professional practice and four areas of cooperation. To support initiatives for partnerships between teacher education programmes and teacher education kindergartens/schools, the Council therefore recommends the following:

Regulation

- The Councils advises against establishing separate regulations for partnerships, but rather that partnership requirements are linked to existing legal documents.
- The Council recommends highlighting *overarching and general* expectations for partnership formations with kindergarten and school owners in framework plans for teacher education.

- Likewise, the Council recommends incorporating *overarching and general* expectations for partnership formations with teacher education programmes into existing legal documents for kindergarten and school owners.
- The Council also recommends that partnership frameworks be specified in national guidelines for all teacher education programmes in order to ensure flexibility and ownership.¹²

Recommendations for the content of regulations

- The Council recommends that the content of provisions clarify the equal responsibility of the parties to develop and participate in partnerships based on the core tasks of the parties.
- The Council recommends that the content of regulations safeguard the need of the parties for local flexibility to enable the development of sustainable ‘third space’ collaboration.

Other tools and resources that can support partnership formations

- The Council believes there is a need for predictability in the financing of partnerships in order to ensure equal participation and realistic working conditions for all those involved. Equity and joint ownership should be safeguarded through the requirement that teacher education programmes and kindergartens/schools and their owners be involved in partnership activities. The Council envisions two ways to ensure predictability in financing, both of which are needed:
 - Long-term financing in which the parties are funding recipients. The goal of funding should be to promote sustainability and the establishment of a permanent infrastructure for genuine ownership and participation in partnerships.
 - Short-term and targeted funding for three to five years in order to stimulate innovation and the (further) development of new and existing partnerships. Examples of such targeted initiatives include joint R&D work, dual positions and staff exchanges.
- The Council believes there is a need for resources specifically targeting R&D activities in partnerships, for example in the form of R&D resources allocated through the Research Council of Norway and DIKU, in order to strengthen the R&D-based knowledge base on partnerships in teacher education, both nationally and internationally. A criterion for applying for such funding should be obligatory collaboration between the parties.
- The Council recommends that partnerships are promoted and further developed through the establishment of arenas for knowledge and experience summaries and joint knowledge development.
- The Council recommends the development of support and guidance materials based on the Knowledge Base and this report.

¹² National guidelines for teacher education programmes are dynamic documents that should be developed and modified as needed and in close collaboration with specialist communities in teacher education, schools and kindergartens (see <https://www.uhr.no/temasider/nasjonale-retningslinjer/nasjonale-retningslinjer-for-larerutdanningene/>).

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