



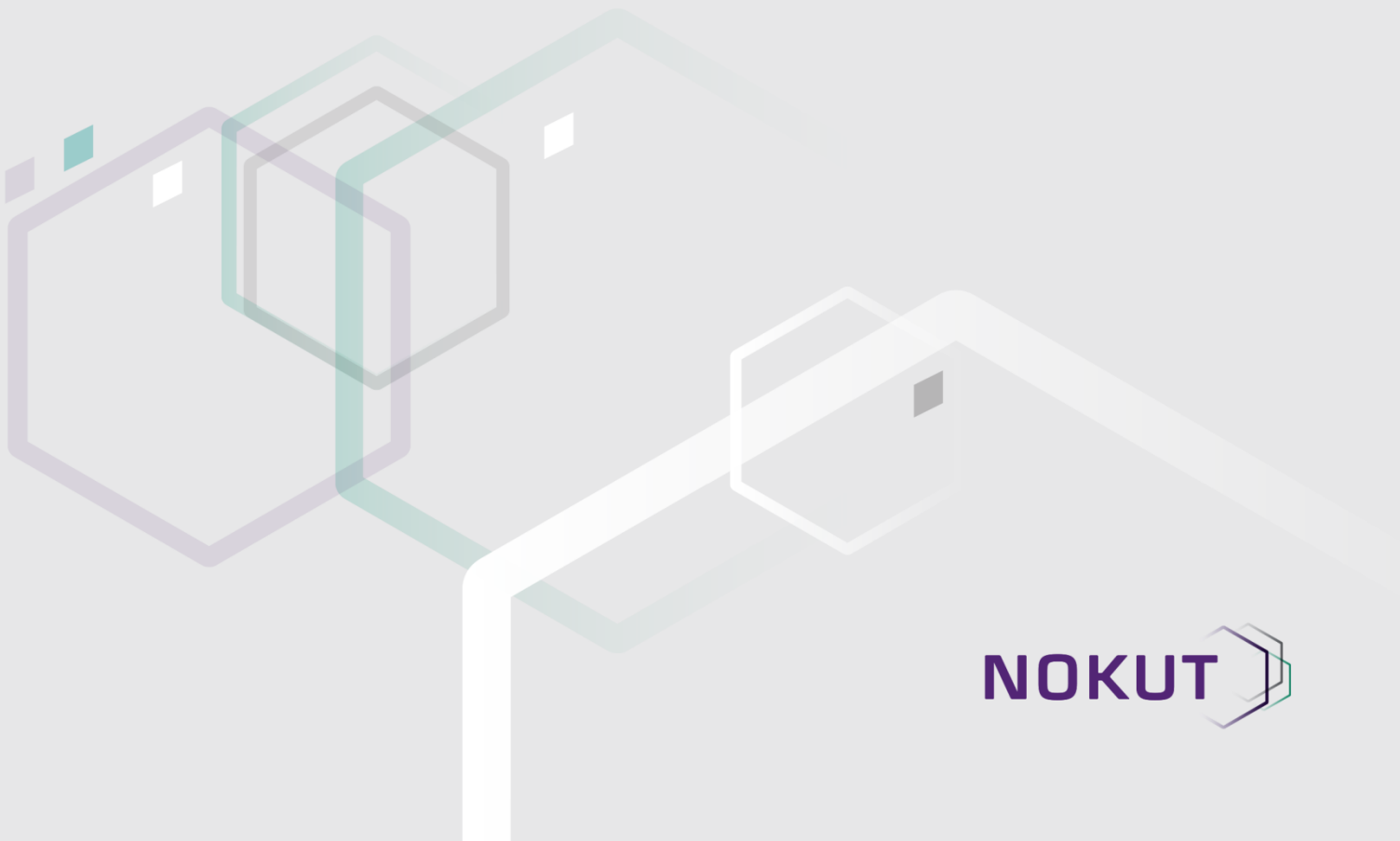
Centres of
Excellence in
Education

NOKUT's evaluations

Centre for Professional Learning in Teacher Education (ProTed)

Mid-term evaluation - Centre of Excellence in Higher Education

October 2015



NOKUT

NOKUT is tasked with safeguarding and promoting quality in higher education and tertiary vocational education to ensure that society has confidence in the good quality of the education provided by educational institutions. NOKUT does this in part by supervising and stimulating the development of quality in education at Norwegian institutions, and through analyses and research conducted in order to increase knowledge about factors that influence quality in education.

NOKUT's work to stimulate the development of quality in education is multi-faceted. One important measure is the management of the Centre for Excellence in Education scheme (SFU). The overarching aim of the SFU scheme is to contribute to the development of excellent quality in higher education and to highlight the fact that education and research are equally important activities for higher education institutions. It is a parallel to Centres of Excellence in Research and other top centre arrangements in the area of research.

Host Institution:	University of Oslo
Consortium Partner:	UiT – The Arctic University of Norway
Name of Centre:	Centre for Professional Learning in Teacher Education (ProTed)
Status as SFU granted:	2012-2016
Expert Committee:	Professor Duncan Lawson, Newman University (Chair) Professor Elaine Munthe, University of Stavanger Senior Research Associate Don Westerheijden, University of Twente Professor Jeppe Bundsgaard, Aarhus University Student Espen Tangnes, University of Bergen
Case Officers:	Adviser Ingvild Andersen Helseth and Senior Adviser Astrid Børsheim, NOKUT

Foreword

This report marks a key milestone in the history of the Norwegian Centre for Excellence in Education scheme (SFU), as it is the first mid-term evaluation of an SFU. In 2011, ProTed (Centre for Professional Learning in Teacher Education) gained the status as a pilot SFU for the period 2012 to 2016, with a possibility of extension to another five-year period after a mid-term evaluation.

January this year, NOKUT appointed an expert panel to conduct the mid-term evaluation of ProTed. The committee chaired by Pro-Vice Chancellor and Professor Duncan Lawson has done a thorough and professional evaluation of the first SFU, and we thank the members of the expert panel for their great work.

In addition, we would like to extend our gratitude to ProTed for the extensive work the centre has done in order to provide the necessary documentation and interviews for this evaluation.

The expert panel's evaluation (found in chapter 3 in this report) forms the basis of the decision of the NOKUT board on whether to extend ProTed's SFU status for another five years or not.

29 October 2015, the NOKUT's board made its decision. Their decision is that ProTed's SFU status is prolonged (see also Chapter 4).

This entails that ProTed's SFU status is extended until 2021. An agreement between NOKUT and ProTed for the second SFU period will be signed. We ask ProTed to take the advice given by the expert panel into serious consideration.

Terje Mørland

NOKUT Director

Summary

NOKUT appointed an Expert Committee to carry out the mid-term evaluation of ProTed, the first SFU. The Expert Committee was charged with making a recommendation to NOKUT as to whether or not ProTed's SFU status should be extended for a further five years, following the completion of their first five years as an SFU. The final decision on this question is to be taken by the NOKUT Board.

The Expert Committee was comprised of Norwegian and international colleagues, and included student representation. NOKUT asked the Expert Committee to review ProTed against four criteria: progress towards the goals of the SFU scheme; progress towards the goals ProTed set itself in its original application to become an SFU; the impact of ProTed as an SFU; and the sustainability of ProTed's activities.

The Expert Committee scrutinised documentation from ProTed, including annual reports from its time as an SFU and a self-evaluation document. In addition, the Expert Committee carried out a week-long site visit, which involved going to both host universities. During the site visit, a series of interviews took place with the leadership of both universities, the ProTed leadership, ProTed staff, student representatives, students, representatives of University Schools and other external colleagues including the Knowledge Centre for Education and The Norwegian Centre for ICT in Education.

After thorough consideration of all the evidence it had available, the Expert Committee concluded that, in many areas, ProTed has made significant advances from the point at which it was awarded SFU status. This is seen most clearly in its development of the University School concept, which the Expert Committee regard as, currently, 'the jewel in ProTed's crown'. ProTed has also made major progress in the curriculum design and practice of research-informed integration in teacher education (with University Schools playing a crucial role in this).

ProTed has had a major impact in the two host institutions and is making a growing contribution nationally. Colleagues from ProTed have undertaken extensive dissemination activity to a wide range of audiences, including Government and policy makers as well as fellow academics.

The Expert Committee unanimously and unreservedly recommends to the NOKUT Board that ProTed's status as an SFU be extended for a further five years.

If the NOKUT Board accepts this recommendation, the Expert Committee recommends that ProTed develop a new strategic plan to encompass the remaining six years as an SFU, with a focus on dissemination for action and establishing a legacy 'post-SFU' beginning immediately.

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1 Introduction

1.1 *This Report*

This report is the mid-term evaluation of the first Norwegian Centre of Excellence in Higher Education (SFU), ProTed at the University of Oslo and UiT - The Arctic University of Norway.

The report's introduction (Chapter 1) describes the structure of the report, the SFU scheme, and gives an introduction to Norwegian teacher education and ProTed.

In Chapter 2, we describe the composition of the Expert Committee and how the evaluation was conducted.

The main part of the report (Chapter 3) starts with the Expert Committee's discussion and interpretation of the mandate and the criteria, and is followed by the evaluation of ProTed's success as a SFU after three and a half years.

The NOKUT Board makes the final decision on prolongation of SFU status. The Expert Committee's evaluation in Chapter 3 forms the basis for the board's decision. NOKUT's decision is found in Chapter 4.

The report is written partly by the secretariat and partly by the Committee. NOKUT has written the background for the evaluation and the evaluation process, while the Committee is responsible for the evaluation chapter.

1.2 *The SFU Scheme*

The Ministry of Education and Research established "Centres of Excellence in Higher Education" (SFU) in 2010 as a prestige arrangement for educational activities in higher education. The SFU scheme, which NOKUT manages, implies a concentrated, focused and long-term commitment to stimulate the development of teaching and learning methods at the bachelor and master's level.

The overarching goal of the SFU scheme is to contribute to the development of excellent quality in higher education, and to highlight the fact that education and research are equally important activities for higher education institutions. It is a central goal to stimulate excellent research and development informed education.

The White Paper 2008: 3 'A Holistic View – A New Structure for Higher Education', first proposed the SFU scheme. The government asked the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions to investigate the proposal further, and a committee chaired by Professor Kirsten Lykke (UiO) developed the framework for the SFU scheme in 2008 to 2009. The Government gave NOKUT the task of administering it.

During a pilot phase in 2010-2012, criteria and guidelines were developed, and the government mandated that NOKUT should select a pilot centre within teacher education. In the autumn of 2011 NOKUT selected ProTed as the first SFU, and by the summer of 2012 ProTed was up and running.

In 2013, NOKUT announced an open competition for three additional SFUs. By the end of the year, NOKUT awarded three new centres with SFU status. Thus, by January 2014 there were four SFUs in total:

- bioCEED (Centre for Excellence in Biology Education)
- CEMPE (Centre of Excellence in Music Performance Education)
- MatRIC (Centre for Research, Innovation and Coordination of Mathematics Teaching)
- ProTed (Centre for Professional Learning in Teacher Education)

Status as a SFU is awarded for five years. Centre status can be renewed with five additional years, depending on the results of a mid-term evaluation. The criteria for the mid-term evaluation are in appendix 1.

More information about the SFU scheme, including the Standards and Guidelines for Centres and Criteria for the Assessment of Applications, can be found on www.nokut.no.

1.3 Norwegian Teacher Education

In Norway, there are several different teacher education programmes that provide society with teachers who are qualified to teach specific subjects or specific grade levels. We will briefly introduce Norwegian teacher education here as a backdrop to the information and evaluation of ProTed as an SFU.

There are two types of general teacher education programmes that qualify candidates to teach at primary and lower secondary school; one programme for grades 1-7 and one for grades 5-10. Most programmes are four-year (240 ECTS). Students who complete three years of general teacher education can continue on to relevant master programmes, where they complete their fourth year of general teacher education as part of a two-year master programme in teaching. General teacher education was traditionally provided at university colleges.

UiT was the first institution to offer a five-year integrated general teacher education master programme (300 ECTS, for both grades 1-7 and 5-10, see below). The Government has decided that from 2017, all general teacher education programmes should be five-year master programmes.

To qualify as a teacher for the lower secondary and upper secondary level, there are several five-year integrated master programmes (called ‘Lektor’ programmes). Universities (as opposed to university colleges) traditionally organise these five-year programmes. In addition, many institutions offer a one-year (60 ECTS) “Practical and didactic education programme” (called ‘Praktisk-pedagogisk utdanning, PPU’) where students build on their previous academic studies to qualify for teaching at the secondary level.

There are also special programmes for vocational teacher education.

1.4 ProTed¹

ProTed is an abbreviation for ‘Centre for Professional Learning in Teacher Education’. ProTed entails a teacher education collaboration between the University of Oslo (UiO) and UiT - The Arctic University of Norway (UiT), where the concept consists of developing a comprehensive research-based teacher education in cooperation with partner schools.

The centre is organised as a consortium, with UiO as the host. ProTed collaborates closely with the established teacher education programmes at UiO and UiT, namely three integrated five-year master programmes:

- ‘Teacher Education Programme 8-13’ at UiO
- ‘Teacher Education Programme 1-7’ at UiT
- ‘Teacher Education Programme 5-10’ at UiT

According to the evaluation of ProTed in the final round of the initial application, ProTed is intended as a structuring space for systematic experimentation with comprehensive teacher education programmes that will integrate a strong research base, close cooperation with the employment market and education based on deep interaction between profession-oriented and academic elements. The plans included student participation in R&D-work with international partners, research groups and the applicants' University Schools.

The cooperating institutions want to utilise their strengths, namely UiT's close contact with the development processes in the employment market and UiO's very extensive research communities.

The centre's vision is to ‘educate knowledgeable, confident, and internationally oriented professional teachers for a multicultural knowledge society’. The overarching goal is to ‘develop a centre that develop and promotes research based, integrated teacher education for knowledge based practices at multiple learning areas’.

The centre's activities are organised in five work packages (WP1-5):

- WP1 Teaching Subjects: Promoting new practices in subject disciplines
- WP2 University Schools and Professional Practices: developing practice placements in collaboration with University Schools
- WP3 Digital Learning Environments: promoting integration through new teaching and learning methods mediated by technology
- WP4 Educational Leadership and Staff Competence Development: implementing integrated teacher education programs: Developing models and principles for academic/staff/organizational development
- WP5 Integrated Study Designs: Develop principles for integrative study designs and quality in teacher education.

The conclusion of the Expert Committee that assessed applications for SFU status in 2011 was:

(...) the Committee's believes that the ambitious ProTed project is, by virtue of the centre's potential for dissemination, clearly more likely to strengthen the national quality

¹ The information about ProTed provided here is based on the application, the self-evaluation and ProTed's website.

of teacher education. Among other things, this potential is based on the centre's strongly innovative nature and the complementary cooperation between the two universities, which addresses the most important challenges facing a profession-oriented and research-based teacher education.

The assessment in its entirety is available at www.nokut.no.

2 The Evaluation Process

2.1 The Expert Committee

An international Expert Committee, in accordance with the guidelines for the SFU scheme, conducted the mid-term evaluation of ProTed. Pro-Vice Chancellor and Professor Duncan Lawson, Newman University, chaired the Committee². The other members of the Expert Committee is:

- Professor Jeppe Bundsgaard, Aarhus University
- Professor Elaine Munthe, University of Stavanger
- Student Espen Tangnes, University of Bergen
- Senior Researcher Don Westerheijden, CHEPS, University of Twente

Relevant qualifications of the members of the panel is available in appendix 2.

The Expert Committee received the following mandate in a letter from NOKUT 23 January 2015:

“The Committee will evaluate the Centre’s results in relation to the goals for the SFU scheme, the goals the Centre put forward in the application and the impact that the Centre has had. The Committee’s written assessment should include a recommendation to NOKUT’s board on whether the SFU status should be extended or not.

The evaluation will be based on the standards and guidelines for the SFU scheme, the Centre’s application, the Centre’s self-evaluation, other relevant information provided by NOKUT and a site-visit.”

The panel members signed a declaration of impartiality and had to refrain from participating in any public debate concerning this Centre of Excellence during the process, as the Committee’s discussions and use of information during the process is confidential. However, this report is publicly available once the NOKUT Board has reached its decision regarding prolongation of ProTed’s SFU status.

Secretariat for the Committee have been adviser Ingvild Andersen Helseth and senior adviser Astrid Børshem, from NOKUT. In addition, Accreditation Officer Mai Sandby Hansen has accompanied NOKUT from The Danish Accreditation Institution.

2.2 The Expert Committee’s Work

The method used in this evaluation process is a peer review of the centre’s performance during the first three and a half years, based on document analyses and site visits.

NOKUT sent ProTed a template for self-evaluation on 16 January 2015 which ProTed returned 16 March 2015. NOKUT developed the template and revised it after consultations with Pro-Vice Chancellor and Professor Duncan Lawson.

² The Committee was initially chaired by Professor Vicky Gunn, who due to personal reasons had to resign. Professor Duncan Lawson, then member of the Committee, was appointed as chair in June 2015. NOKUT concluded that the overall competences and experience within the Committee was sufficient to conduct the evaluation without appointing another member of the Committee.

In addition to ProTed's self-evaluation, the Committee received relevant documents such as general documentation of the SFU scheme, ProTed's application for centre status, and the three annual reports (2012, 2013 and 2014), as well as other documents that NOKUT considered relevant for the evaluation. During the process, the Committee members requested and got access to additional documents, and ProTed sent additional documents on their own initiative. A list of the documents that constitute the evaluation material is found in appendix 3.

The Committee met on two occasions during the evaluation process. The first Committee meeting took place on 6 May 2015, where the Committee discussed the documentation and prepared for the following site visit. The site visit took place from 14 to 19 June 2015. The Committee visited both Oslo and Tromsø, as ProTed is a consortium between UiO and UiT. During the site visit, the Committee undertook several interviews in order to get a solid picture of the accomplishments of the centre. The full list of interviews is available in appendix 4. The physical meetings of the Committee were supplemented by extensive electronic contact between the Expert Committee, including a Skype meeting on 9 July 2015.

This report is the result of the Expert Committee's assignment and was presented to NOKUT's board 29 October 2015. The board's decision can be found in Chapter 4.

3 Evaluation of ProTed as a Centre of Excellence in Higher Education

3.1 Introduction

NOKUT specified that there should be four main areas of focus for the mid-term evaluation. These are:

1. The goals of the SFU scheme;
2. The goals that the centre put forward in its application;
3. The impact that the Centre has had;
4. An assessment of the sustainability aspect.

Each of these criteria is itself multi-faceted – for example, the SFU scheme has several goals and ProTed put forward many goals in its application to become an SFU. In evaluating ProTed against each facet of each criterion, the Expert Committee acknowledges that ProTed’s performance over the last three and a half years will be measured on a continuum rather than by a simply binary “yes/no” judgement. The Expert Committee felt that it would not be helpful to make statements should as “ProTed has (or has not) achieved the first goal it set itself”, but rather should comment on the extent of progress towards (or beyond) the goal.

The Expert Committee also took into account the fact that when ProTed put forward its application; this was for a five-year programme of activity. Since the Expert Committee was carrying out a mid-term evaluation after three and a half years, it would be highly surprising if it were to be found that ProTed had delivered everything set out in its application when only 70% of the scheduled time had elapsed. Furthermore, no matter how well written the original proposal was the Expert Committee would expect to see dynamic development of plans in response to findings from research activities and to changing external circumstances. The over-arching goals would remain the same but some of the activities to bring these goals about may be different to those set out in the proposal.

Notwithstanding the earlier comments about evaluating ProTed’s progress on a continuum, the Expert Committee has been charged by NOKUT with making a binary recommendation, either “Extend SFU status for a further five years” or “Do not extend SFU status for a further five years”. In coming to a conclusion, the Expert Committee has decided to make a cumulative judgement based on all facets of all criteria. A positive outcome will not require “perfection” in each individual facet but will require the accumulation of achievement over all facets to be at a level that convinces the Expert Committee that ProTed is worthy of continuing as an SFU for a further five years.

In subsequent sections, we will review, in turn, each of the four principal criteria before coming to a summative conclusion and making a recommendation to the NOKUT Board. Some material is relevant to more than one criterion and will therefore be repeated in more than one of the following sections so that the reflection on each criterion is self-contained and does not need to cross-reference to other sections.

3.2 Criterion 1: The Goals of the SFU Scheme

The goals of the SFU scheme, as stated by NOKUT³, are that the SFU arrangement shall:

- stimulate universities and colleges to establish and develop academic communities that provide excellent education
- contribute towards knowledge-based analysis and development of teaching and learning work as a tool for quality improvement and innovation in higher education institutions
- contribute towards good relations between the educational and other relevant societal and professional fields
- contribute towards the development and dissemination of knowledge.

An SFU must therefore:

- provide excellent R&D-based education
- develop innovative ways of working with R&D-based education
- contribute to the development and dissemination of knowledge about educational methods that are conducive to learning.

Translating these goals into elements for the mid-term evaluation, the Expert Committee's brief prepared by NOKUT stated that:

- An SFU should be outstanding at the time of the awarding of SFU status; both in terms of the documented quality of its established educational provision and in terms of its centre plan. For the mid-term evaluation, this means that the Expert Committee is required to assess whether the documented quality of the study programmes remains outstanding or, ideally, is even more outstanding at this point. This is assessed in comparison with other communities within the same educational area, nationally and internationally.
- The Expert Committee should look into the organisational structure, leadership and other infrastructural framework elements concerning the centre. To what extent has the centre succeeded in becoming a well-functioning unit and is the centre's organisation suitable for reaching the goals of the SFU scheme and the centre's own goals?
- The SFU scheme particularly aims at stimulating and rewarding the work that takes place in the interaction of students, teachers, support services and the knowledge base of the educational activities. This means that the Expert Committee should closely review whether the centre offers excellent and innovative R&D-based education. It should also look into the ways in which students are included in centre activities and decisions.
- For educational programmes aiming at specific professions, relations with the professional field will be of central importance. How does the centre interact with the professional field and in what way does this interaction benefit the students?

These national goals and criteria have been taken up in the goals, strategies and activities (work packages – WP1-5) that ProTed has defined for itself. The Expert Committee's evaluation of the extent to which ProTed has advanced towards the national SFU goals is therefore closely related to its progress towards achieving its own stated goals (this is discussed in detail in the following section focusing on Criterion 2).

³ http://www.nokut.no/Documents/NOKUT/Artikkelbibliotek/UA-enhet/SFU/SFU_Standards_Guidelines_and_Criteria_for_the_Assessment_of_Applications.pdf

The Expert Committee first considered whether the centre offers **excellent and innovative R&D-based education**, acknowledging that in 2011 it had been judged to be doing so. The projects in WP1 and WP3 can be seen as the elements in ProTed most aimed at further developing excellent and innovative, R&D-based education for teacher education students in UiO and UiT. Both universities have actively started a large number of projects to test what are, for them, innovative approaches in teacher education. Whilst some of these projects are clearly innovative by national or even international standards, the Expert Committee felt that some others could only be regarded as innovative at a local scale. Especially in UiO, these local innovations appear to have improved the student experience considerably, particularly during the early years of the study programme of teacher education students, by such measures as additional seminars for teacher education students focusing on pedagogy relating to the scientific subject content being studied and giving the first year teacher education students the option to have an experienced teacher as a mentor.

The Expert Committee found that the teacher education programmes for years 1-7 and years 5-10 at UiT had maintained and further enhanced integrated and research-based approaches, particularly the integration of a research-based approach into the master's thesis. The role UiT is playing in discussions for renewal of teacher education curricula nationally bears witness to this. The teacher education programme at the UiO has been restructured extensively since the inception of ProTed, which makes it into a more integrated learning experience for students; both students and staff showed high degrees of satisfaction with the programme structure introduced in the academic year 2014-15 even though it was too early to see concrete results. The R&D-base of teacher education at the UiO has remained strong. The positive role of ProTed as an impetus for development of their own teacher education curricula was stressed by staff interviewed at both universities.

Concerning the **organisational structure, leadership and other infrastructural framework elements**, the Expert Committee noted that ProTed has organised itself as a centre in two universities, each led by a local director assisted by a coordinator, with an overarching board, and an International Advisory Committee. Both universities provide ProTed with substantial financial support in addition to the SFU funding received from NOKUT.

The Expert Committee found that the two local directors were the senior scientific staff members who had most responsibility for the strategic development of ProTed. The local coordinators occupied key positions in assuring the day-to-day operation of ProTed's activities, thus effectively operationalising the strategies. Each work package was led by two local leaders, one in UiO and one in UiT; the local leaders appeared to the Expert Committee to function as coherent tandems assuring that the local projects implemented by many academic staff members remained on track.

Communication between the two geographically widely-separated universities appeared to the Expert Committee to be regular and rigorous, with virtual modes of contact making up an increasing part of the communication. The Expert Committee welcomed the shift towards more efficient means of communication, although it recognises that face-to-face meetings remain the richest form of communication and are therefore an indispensable means of contact in ProTed.

Most projects in WP1 and WP3 have a local character however, which is a logical consequence of the different types of teacher education programmes and different academic contexts in the two locations. With regard to the latter, the situation in UiT is organisationally simpler in that the responsibility for teacher education rests primarily in a single department, ILP. In UiO, more coordination is necessary

between, on the one hand, ILS and, on the other hand, the various faculties where students study subject content in their first three years. In both universities, the WP1 and WP3 projects appear to be forging new, more intensive and productive links among academic staff in the local institution than existed previously.

The ProTed Board is the senior administrative body within ProTed. The Board seeks to identify synergies between the two universities and to make cooperation as smooth as possible, by overcoming obstacles such as the different administrative systems. The Expert Committee felt that there was scope for the ProTed Board to play a more proactive role in the development of overall strategy for the centre; there was a concern about the heavy reliance on the directors at each institution in terms of developing strategy, overseeing delivery and contributing to projects.

The international scientific board is used by ProTed senior staff as a base for scientific inspiration and as a network for international cooperation, in the first place for research underlying ProTed's activities and, secondly, for opportunities for international experiences for their students. However, it appears to the Expert Committee that the international advisors are mostly consulted on an individual basis, each interacting with ProTed staff but hardly with each other. The Expert Committee sees potential for a more sophisticated interaction with the international teacher education experts in the board, which might result in future projects, already in the design phase (such as those within WP1 and WP3), being scrutinized against international standards and selection of potential projects made accordingly.

Overall, the Expert Committee views the organisational structure of ProTed positively, but would make the following recommendations:

- More emphasis could be given, at Board level, to developing and maintaining a strategic view on ProTed's overall activities; a great deal currently depends on two individuals (the two directors), one of whom has stepped down recently;
- Better use could be made of the international scientific board.

The Expert Committee looked into **the ways in which students are included** in centre activities and decisions. There is student representation on the Board of ProTed and this representation has been successful in communicating the goals and activities of ProTed to the wider student body. Partly through the R&D-base, some students are involved with staff in research projects related to ProTed's goals. Students have been included in the educational projects of ProTed, for example, in a number of projects in WPs 1 and 3. Students whom the Expert Committee interviewed also mentioned how the normal ways of participation in decision-making in the departments and faculties concerned were open to them. Furthermore, students in interviews in both Oslo and Tromsø mentioned that they have easy access to teaching staff, who are generally very responsive to suggestions from students. The relatively negative results of the *Studiebarometeret*⁴ were not recognised by the first-year students at UiO, although students from later years could understand some of the outcomes but felt that measures now introduced to create a greater sense of identity for student teachers would address these issues. The students also reported times when, in response to their suggestions, ProTed had supplied funding to enable the students to organise events such as a one-day conference on the latest developments in ICT.

The Expert Committee is aware that the interviewed students may have been among the most active and engaged students; nonetheless, their feedback gave a positive impression of ProTed's inclusion of

⁴ Studiebarometeret.no is a web portal that shows how students perceive the quality of education in study programmes at Norwegian universities and university colleges. It is administered by NOKUT.

students. Accordingly, the Expert Committee concluded that students are appropriately included in the activities and decisions of the centre.

The final criterion in this section includes the **relations with the professional field** and how **this interaction benefits the students**. The Expert Committee found that relations with the professional field could be considered in two ways. Firstly, the primary and secondary schools, the future working environment of graduates, were taken into consideration. In this respect, WP2 was of prime importance: the development of the University School concept has been a highly successful element of ProTed in the eyes of staff, schools and students. The schools felt respected as important partners in the teacher education programmes; some saw being a University School as a mark of their own quality and as an impetus for further quality improvement of their school at the same time. Students mentioned that it very much benefitted their learning experience, because the practice periods were better organised and more coherent (with both the university and the school ‘speaking the same message’).

Secondly, the professional field of teacher education in Norwegian higher education was considered. Dissemination of the models, experiences and research findings of ProTed projects is an important part of the remit of ProTed. The Expert Committee found two types of reactions to this part of the role of ProTed among the staff members in both universities. On the one hand, staff members appreciated the importance of their increased role in the national debate, such as, in the restructuring of teacher education curricula nationally in the coming years, and of being asked to contribute to all kinds of scientific and professional forums. On the other hand, it appears staff members were somewhat overwhelmed by the volume of this task. In several places, the self-evaluation report voiced a fear that the demands of dissemination activities threatened to take away attention from the actual research and development of R&D-based curricula and models. In this respect, the Expert Committee commends ProTed for the introduction of the “Knowledge Parliament” organised for autumn 2015. The Expert Committee recommends ProTed prioritise such innovative, engagement-inviting dissemination methods in a more structured way in the future, possibly by establishing regular knowledge parliaments starting from a well-prepared knowledge base.

3.3 Criterion 2: ProTed’s Goals

The overarching goal for ProTed is ***to develop a centre that promotes research based, integrated teacher education for knowledge based practices at multiple learning arenas*** (as set out in ProTed’s application document, p.1).

The Expert Committee’s evaluation reflects on the degree to which ProTed is succeeding in reaching this goal. It also refers to central sub-goals that were set forth at the time of application:

- Bring together R&D projects at the two partners and international partners to improve teacher education;
- Internationalise Norwegian teacher education by bringing in perspectives from countries with substantial experience of teaching and assessment practices in multicultural classrooms;
- Networked activities to support student teachers’ professional learning and enhance staff leadership skills;

- Establish University Schools as sites for joint research and improved learning.

Each of the five work packages also has specific goals that contribute to these overarching goals (again taken directly from ProTed's SFU application).

WP1: To disseminate and research innovative practices in foundational courses, including pedagogy and didactics, and to strengthen excellent practices in the integrated study design.

WP2: To develop high quality practice arenas for student teachers, support reflective practices of mentoring and school leadership, and experiment with models where student teachers participate in R & D activities in collaboration between university and schools.

WP3: To strengthen ICT integrated supervision and feedback in the MA studies, the use of interactive video and collaborative, networked technologies. To develop and integrate e-supervision and e-assessment practices in current TED (teacher education) web-based learning environments.

WP4: To develop online and on-campus cross-disciplinary modules, seminars and courses for teaching staff and study programme leaders at UiO and UiT.

WP5: To challenge traditional educational practices and develop high quality TED professional learning designs for diverse learning arenas.

Finally, there are specific goals for dissemination that include workshops for academic leaders and policy makers, online modules, regional and national courses, written dissemination to practitioners and researchers nationally and internationally, the use of Wikis and Blogs and a project web site.

Since the initial application was written, some changes have been made. ProTed has dropped the goal of establishing an online journal (*Teacher Education and Professional Work in School*) choosing, wisely in the Expert Committee's judgement, to use established publication channels. Furthermore, the idea of creating courses for teacher educators (WP4) has also been modified to more organic forms of staff development.

In this section, we will evaluate progress towards each goal based on evidence in the documentation provided and from interviews conducted during the site visits to both universities. We will start by looking at the WP goals and conclude with the overall goal.

3.3.1 Work Package 1

To disseminate and research innovative practices in foundational courses, including pedagogy and didactics, and to strengthen excellent practices in the integrated study design.

The Expert Committee found WP1 the most difficult to evaluate, possibly due to the interim point of this evaluation and the nature and scale of the WP. Task 1, specified in the application, involves the selection of five high quality practices that will be investigated, evaluated, improved and integrated - but so far the five practices have not been identified. Instead, there are a large number of ongoing projects in the subject areas at UiO and also some at UiT. Seed funding has been used to initiate experimentation in teaching and learning and this was deemed to be important tactically in working towards the goal of WP1 by creating a critical mass of staff working on learning and teaching development projects and also (primarily at UiO) to enhance the experience of teacher education

students whilst studying in other faculties. The seed funding has secured the involvement of staff from outside ILS in conducting trials in several subject areas with the aim of developing pedagogy in relation to teacher education students. Examples of increased and enhanced didactical work among faculty are especially evident for teaching at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. This faculty has employed a new teacher education coordinator who is in close contact with ProTed. Another example of increased emphasis on educating teachers, is the involvement of teachers from University Schools who provide seminars only for the students who are in the teacher education programme so that they will gain insight into how the theoretical (subject) knowledge can be used in practice with pupils in schools. This is financed by the University Board at UiO. Student representatives at UiO reported that the teacher education programme is much closer to schools now and considerably more practical in nature. This is especially the case for first year students who choose to take part in the mentor programme. The students interviewed by the Expert Committee whole-heartedly supported this activity and strongly recommended that it should be made compulsory for all students to participate.

At UiT, the academic staff are experimenting with R&D for students in innovative ways, for instance by giving students research tasks and responsibilities during their field placement periods. Integration is not as big a challenge in UiT's programmes, compared to UiO's programmes, since all faculty are more or less employed within the same Department at UiT.

The Expert Committee recognises the challenges in creating a common basis for teacher education pedagogies at university level and especially in programmes that are shared across departments. The Expert Committee concluded that for the remainder of the initial five-year SFU period, it will be important for ProTed to identify a small number (around the 'five' mentioned in the original proposal) of good practices and then determine how to investigate, evaluate, improve and integrate these in ways that will be sustainable.

3.3.2 Work Package 2

To develop high quality practice arenas for student teachers, support reflective practices of mentoring and school leadership, and experiment with models where student teachers participate in R & D activities in collaboration between university and schools.

ProTed's midterm self-evaluation document reports that UiO has established contracts with 20 University Schools and UiT has eight University Schools. UiO's University Schools are mainly upper secondary schools, whereas in Tromsø the schools are elementary and lower secondary schools.

The University School system appears to be very successful. Schools and school "owners" at the municipal level took part in developing selection criteria, they all mention the strength of the "third room" (the overlapping room between University and University School or theory and practice) as central to bridging the gap between theory and practice, and the schools themselves report that they are benefitting considerably from the partnership. One participant, interviewed during the site visit, noted that "We gained more than we expected at the beginning". Teachers in University Schools see themselves as teacher educators both in Oslo and Tromsø and they have played an important role in relation to students' bachelor and master's theses. Students reported that they could easily get in touch with a University School, for instance in connection with testing an interview protocol before using it for their research project or to gather additional data.

University School teachers and leaders report being listened to and feeling ownership of teacher education. Their goal is to become better educators of student teachers. Another consequence is that, as partners, they also gain insight into each other's practices and respect for each other. This leads to a more positive discourse about each other. University staff know the strengths of the University Schools and can invite teachers to come in and tell students about specific projects or to participate in lectures on certain topics. For example, teachers in physical education were involved in the development of course content and teaching methods in P.E. Overall, the teachers and school leaders at University Schools, teachers at the universities, and students in the programmes perceive the University School system as "helping to close the gap."

The Expert Committee finds that although partner schools is not a new idea in teacher education, ProTed has developed the concept of "University Schools" extensively and effectively and has provided insight into how these partnerships can benefit teacher education in innovative ways.

To facilitate the dissemination of good practice, ProTed organised the first national conference on University Schools in 2014. ProTed's development of practices and relationships between universities and schools has been novel, and provides possibilities for professional development both in schools and universities.

3.3.3 Work Package 3

To strengthen ICT integrated supervision and feedback in the MA studies, the use of interactive video and collaborative, networked technologies. To develop and integrate e-supervision and e-assessment practices in current TED web-based learning environments.

ProTed collaborates with several partners with specific ICT competence such as the Norwegian Centre for ICT in Education as well as local centres at each university (USIT, RESULT). This collaboration is important for the development of digital tools and digital videos as well as the use of the "Future lab" at UiT.

One project within this WP has developed the use of tablet computers in assessment of field practice (e-supervision), and another is to provide automatic feedback on results of exams in addition to the actual grade (e-assessment). The e-supervision project was developed in collaboration between ProTed staff at UiO, University Schools and USIT (ICT centre at UiO). Using a tablet, students have filmed each other as they start a lesson. This is sent digitally via a secure data solution, developed by UiO, and teacher educators access the videos to provide feedback and supervision. So far, only a small group of students has taken part in the piloting during fall 2014 and spring 2015.

Many more students have taken part in a new system for automatic feedback on exam results (e-assessment). With traditional written exams, students have the right to gain insight into criteria and reasoning for a grade given on an exam, and they can request these reasons within three weeks after receiving a grade. This has now been altered so that all students that take the digital exam in pedagogy automatically also receive a written assessment along with their grade. Students have reported that the feedback provided may be too general, and this is one of the challenges that ProTed will be working on to develop further.

Another area mentioned for further development, is the use of multiuser platforms. This is only at the starting point.

Students do not report being a part of teacher education programmes where ICT didactics plays a prominent role yet. The Expert Committee was shown the Future Lab in Tromsø where students can access equipment and can prepare for field practice using ICT. These ideas show promise and potential, but are still at an early stage of development and will require a stronger didactical or pedagogical learning approach for them to achieve significant impact.

The practices developed have not yet been extensively researched to investigate how or whether they enhance learning outcomes for students or further their development of professional skills and knowledge. The Expert Committee concluded that although there are individual ICT-based projects that have shown some success, overall strategic development in relation to WP3 is still at an early stage and more time is needed for development, research and to identify sustainable approaches.

3.3.4 Work Package 4

To develop online and on-campus cross-disciplinary modules, seminars and courses for teaching staff and study program leaders at UiO and UiT.

This WP has been modified significantly. The goal is still to develop faculty as teacher educators, but the idea of online courses and common courses for all staff has been abandoned. The Expert Committee agreed that a change was necessary as securing participation in such courses, had they been developed, would have been extremely challenging. At UiO, they have instead developed four integrated weeks for faculty at ILS, and at UiT their emphasis has been on developing supervision of MA theses which is new for the 1-7 and 5-10 programmes.

Both of these projects are still in their early days – but both have been through an initial development and trial. The integrated weeks are concerned with specific professional topics, e.g. classroom management. This requires faculty working together across their own specific domains, and it requires close collaboration with University Schools, again an example of innovative practices requiring collaboration across learning arenas (university and school) and across learning domains.

For UiT, it was especially important to work on developing supervision skills among their own faculty since they were expected to supervise master's theses for the first time in teacher education. This capacity was developed using digital resources due to the multi-campus arrangement of UiT and the long distances involved. As far as the Expert Committee was able to assess, from interviews during the site visit, this was perceived as useful by the participants. The practice of creating and sharing knowledge by analysing and discussing one's own experience and practice supervising master's theses was not a common practice for teacher educators at UiT but this project has created such a framework and appropriate content. In this way, ProTed is achieving the goal set out for this activity, namely to develop supervision competence in a team of colleagues.

These practices have not been researched yet and the link between development and research is not yet clear. The Expert Committee believes that the practices being developed may be valuable for other teacher education programmes to learn from once they have been developed and tested further (particularly given the national policy direction moving to five-year study programmes throughout teacher education), and that this testing should be conducted in research-based ways.

3.3.5 Work Package 5

To challenge traditional educational practices and develop high quality TED professional learning designs for diverse learning arenas.

One of the major accomplishments of WP5 to date is a theoretical article sent for reviewing and possible publication which attempts to analyse and theorize integrated design. The article is written by the WP leader, Jon Magne Vestøl, and the Expert Committee has been given the opportunity to read a draft version. In this article, concepts such as “coherence”, “integration”, “design” and “quality” are addressed.

In addition to this article, ProTed are in the process of compiling an anthology covering various aspects of integrated curriculum design and practice for teacher education.

Much of WP5 is dependent on the progress of the other work packages and the Expert Committee accepts that it is too early in the life of ProTed to expect to see this WP moving to its conclusion.

3.3.6 Dissemination

A recurring theme among ProTed staff has been the issue of dissemination. ProTed leaders and WP leaders report that the demands of dissemination are very time consuming. In all years since being awarded SFU status, ProTed has arranged a substantial number of seminars, has contributed at numerous conferences worldwide, taken part in policy work and been invited to give talks at other Higher Education Institutions. In addition, participants have contributed nationally and internationally with research articles and chapters, and are currently putting together an anthology based on their work to date. ProTed has taken dissemination of their work seriously and have generated many publications that are highly relevant to teacher education and higher education in general. ProTed also has an active Facebook page and a web page, although this has not been as active.

Dissemination is often understood as comprising three functions (see, for example, Harmsworth & Turpin, 2000⁵): dissemination for awareness, dissemination for understanding and dissemination for action. So far, the Expert Committee finds that the emphasis has been on dissemination for awareness (brochures and articles about ProTed and topics that ProTed is concerned with), and for understanding (research articles, chapters, etc). The Expert Committee sees this as a natural course of events – that the emphasis is on awareness and understanding at the outset, but it would also be relevant to disseminate more for engagement and for action in the future.

One important step is being taken by ProTed now: together with the Knowledge Centre at the Norwegian Research Council, ProTed is arranging a “Knowledge Parliament” for teacher educators where they will discuss integrated programme design. This is one way to involve and engage and disseminate for action. It is the Expert Committee’s hope that such dissemination will feature more prominently in the future.

⁵ <http://www.innovations.ac.uk/btg/resources/publications/dissemination.pdf>

3.3.7 Conclusions

The Expert Committee concludes that ProTed is advancing towards the goals it set out at the outset. ProTed is functioning as a centre that promotes research based, integrated teacher education.

After 3.5 years, there are clear signs of novel practices and of steps being taken to create integrated learning environments. The Expert Committee finds the work being done together with University Schools (WP2) is excellent and an important contribution to teacher education which is also relevant for other professional education programmes. The Committee recognizes that WP1 is at an exploratory stage still, but that this WP should contribute several examples of innovative research based practice in the years to come. The mentor sessions at UiO have been especially valuable for students. Work has begun in WP3 and WP4 with some successes and more can be expected. The Expert Committee recommends that WP3 is strengthened to integrate a stronger focus on “ICT-enabled” didactics across different subject areas and that WP4 is also modified to accommodate such a move.

With regard to the four “sub-goals”, stated in the opening paragraph of this Section, there is clear evidence that ProTed is making strong progress towards three of these. The Expert Committee found that progress towards the sub-goal relating to internationalizing Norwegian teacher education was not as strong. This is not to say that there has been no progress in this area, work undertaken at UiT is starting to lead to results worthy of further dissemination. In addition, members of the International Advisory Board are providing an international perspective to some of the work of ProTed. However, ProTed have themselves identified that this is an area that will receive greater focus in the years ahead.

The Expert Committee is impressed by the volume of dissemination work that has taken place and, as noted above, believes that the time is now right for a new, more diversified dissemination plan that will encompass all three aspects of dissemination in a more strategic manner.

3.4 Criterion 3: Impact

The third area of the mid-term evaluation concerns the impact that the centre has had both within and across disciplines. When assessing impact, the Expert Committee was asked to look at the institutional, national and international levels.

The NOKUT guidance stated that “The centre should be able to document the impact of its activities. A critical point is how they evaluate impact and what reflections they have made and actions they have taken, based on such evaluations. To enable the Committee to evaluate the centre’s impact, there should be a ‘baseline’ to compare the present situation with.”

In relation to dissemination activities, the Expert Committee was asked not only to review the number or characteristics of activities, but also to what extent they have actually led to action and improvement.

3.4.1 Qualitative Baseline

The centre did not present an actual baseline that could function as a yardstick to measure the impact of the centre over the last three years. However, the Expert Committee is able to describe a baseline in

qualitative terms based on the original application, documents supplied by ProTed and from information gained during the site visit.

In the final “Assessment of applications”, the SFU Assessment Committee concluded, in relation to ProTed’s application, that “The application is based on a complementary cooperation between the two institutions, which seeks to utilise their strengths, namely UiT’s close contact with the development processes in the employment market and UiO’s very extensive research communities.” The SFU Assessment Committee clearly identified the strengths at UiO and UiT that led to the award of SFU status.

However, this did not mean that everything was perfect at the two institutions. In Oslo, before ProTed started, there was limited integration within the curriculum, teacher education did not receive special attention in the design of the study programmes of the scientific subjects, even where student teachers formed a large part of the student group. Students did not have a clear identity as trainee teachers.

The teacher education researchers in Oslo were highly esteemed in the national research context, but their collaboration with local teachers or schools was limited.

In Tromsø, the new five-year integrated study programme had been planned and started and was showing promising results. The collaboration with specially appointed University Schools was promising and gave the teacher students an insightful knowledge into their future profession. Even though teacher education did play a significant role at the Faculty of Education, the other Faculties did not give special attention to the teacher education students. The research done in Tromsø in connection to the teacher education was not comprehensive or widespread.

The two institutions did not collaborate to any great extent before the formation of ProTed.

3.4.2 The Institutional Level

At the site visit, it became clear that ProTed has played a significant role in a shift in attitude towards teacher education at both universities. At the meetings with the leadership at both universities, the Expert Committee heard how teacher education has now become a strategic focus at both institutions. It was repeatedly highlighted that teacher education is the only discipline specifically mentioned in UiO’s strategic plan. Teacher education is now held in much higher regard at both institutions. ProTed has a unique status in both universities, and this has increased motivation for teacher education, leading to high-level meetings in both universities about teacher education. One of the Rectors strongly made the point that “ProTed has injected motivation into this field”.

The *Studiebarometeret* still shows rather disquieting results about the education at the two teacher education programmes, but based on the meetings with student teachers, the Expert Committee has reason to believe that this will change as the developments instigated by ProTed work through the system.

ProTed has had further impact across the institutions. At the meetings with the university leadership at both UiO and UiT, it became clear that Learning and Teaching have become more valued, not only in relation to teacher education programmes, but on a wider scale at both universities.

3.4.3 Across the Two Universities

It is clear that the existence of ProTed has produced a considerable amount of collaboration between the two universities. The Expert Committee heard the expression “ideas travel” several times during the site visits. There are many examples of good practices and clever solutions that were developed or invented at one of the two universities and which are now adopted or being worked on at the other. Sometimes the ideas are developed further and then travel back to the originating institution. Examples of this include the University Schools, digital exams and dialogue seminars.

3.4.4 Practice Development

The Expert Committee has witnessed a comprehensive move to more experimenting within practices at the two universities. Whilst not all experiments are successful, many do show ways in which teaching and learning practices could be improved or, even if they are not successful, give insights into barriers to enhancement.

One example is the newly developed digital exam, which seems to show a way in which other exams may be more digitally supported. The same can be said of the project where tablet computers are used to record and maintain experiences in practice teaching, which can then be shared, analysed and discussed with peers and staff in teacher education.

Another aspect of practice development is further professional development of those who are already teachers. In several meetings, the Expert Committee heard of school teachers who had become interested in research and development, and therefore were planning to, or actually did, go on to follow master’s degree or PhD programmes. In addition, many other teachers, although not having undertaken further qualifications, have developed greater understanding of the importance of evidence-informed practice and have collaborated with student teachers in their master’s thesis projects. This can be considered a very welcome side effect of ProTed and of the University School programme, which has intensified the collaboration between practitioners and researchers.

In the two work packages WP1 and WP3, there are many projects designed to improve aspects of the student experience both directly due to the focus of the project and indirectly by encouraging the staff involved in the project to be more aware of the needs of teacher education students. Whilst the Expert Committee understood the rationale behind having such a large number of projects, it appeared that they were not well co-ordinated with the overall ProTed strategy. The Expert Committee formed the impression that some of these small projects are unlikely to have much impact beyond the local context of the class in which they have taken place. As indicated in the previous section relating to Criterion 2, the Expert Committee believes that the next stage of activity in WP1 should be identifying a small number of key good practices and then investigating, evaluating, improving and integrating these across the teacher education programmes in the two universities and beyond.

The integrated study design of the curriculum at both institutions is very strongly influenced by the work done in ProTed. The Expert Committee received very positive insights into how an integrated teacher education programme supports students in developing relevant theoretically-based, practice-oriented competences.

3.4.5 The National Level

ProTed has worked in a number of ways at the national level. Representatives from ProTed have been invited to consult with the government and administration on several of occasions and have participated in a variety of meetings with government officers. An example of a very important activity of this kind is that ProTed has been participating in the development of the guidelines for the new five-year master's programme. This has enabled the experiences and findings from ProTed's work to have a significant impact nationally. Representatives from ProTed are also regularly invited to present at conferences, both locally within the universities and nationally.

Another example of likely impact at the national level is found in the so-called Knowledge Parliament, which ProTed is organising in collaboration with the Knowledge Centre for Education. The way Knowledge Parliaments are organised makes the Expert Committee anticipate that both dissemination and sharing of knowledge can be expected, which can potentially lead to changes in many levels at many institutions.

The meeting with the National ICT Centre convinced the Expert Committee that ProTed functions as a core partner for the National ICT Centre and thereby has significant impact on how ICT is promoted and integrated into education at all levels.

Researchers affiliated to ProTed have published a large number of research articles in relation to their work, both in the Norwegian and English languages. In Tromsø, the dean of the Faculty of Education attributed a significant rise in the number of publications in the faculty to the work done by ProTed.

ProTed planned to disseminate knowledge through their website. But the Expert Committee's examination of the website shows that this has not been accomplished to the extent that might have been anticipated. ProTed has instead chosen to use a Facebook page to a much larger extent. The activity at this page shows that ProTed is active in many contexts and it gives the followers good insights (and to some extent information) of the activities and findings of ProTed.

However, if a visitor wants to know what has been published on the research carried out by ProTed, an overview of which projects are being undertaken or how the centre is progressing overall, the website is not very informative. The Expert Committee does not find that the Facebook page addresses these issues and suggests that ProTed may wish to review its approach to making information available via the internet.

3.4.6 International Level

ProTed is first and foremost a centre with a national focus. Nevertheless, it is part of the goals of SFU's to build relations internationally and disseminate knowledge beyond the Norwegian borders. The Expert Committee is convinced that ProTed has contributions to make internationally with their findings and experiences particularly in relation to the design and implementation of integrated study programmes, the concept of University Schools, digital exams and use of tablet computers in teacher education.

Most of the efforts to date towards an impact on the international level seem to be focused on the research area. A number of articles have been published in English in international journals. The Expert Committee's meeting with a representative from the Scientific Advisory Board suggested that

the ProTed research will have an international impact. There appeared to be less focus on initiatives to share experiences related to the development of good practices (as opposed to research) in integrated study programmes, although this may change with the publication of the forthcoming anthology.

3.4.7 Conclusions

Based on the progress from the qualitative baseline to the midterm status, the Expert Committee concludes that ProTed has had significant impact at both the local (institutional) level and the national level. Impact on the international level is still embryonic, but the Expert Committee considers it likely this will increase as ProTed's work becomes more mature.

The Expert Committee suggests that it is likely to be beneficial in terms of impact for serious efforts to be put into establishing a more effective external window to the ProTed's inner workings. This could be achieved through a more closely curated website.

The Expert Committee recommends that the work being carried out in WP1 and WP3 is scrutinised, screened and revised to focus on more generalizable principles and practices which are founded in research-based knowledge of good teaching and learning practices. Thereby the work undertaken in these two work packages can have a wider and greater impact.

3.5 Criterion 4: Sustainability

The last area of the mid-term evaluation concerns sustainability. The areas to be investigated by the Expert Committee are:

- The centre should have plans for its termination and the continuation of knowledge and good practice developed within the centre (exit strategies).
- The centre should have plans for the next period should SFU status be prolonged, including a plan for how they intend to continue their development of excellence.

3.5.1 Termination

There are two possible scenarios for termination and for which exit strategies are needed:

- NOKUT does not award ProTed a further five years funding as an SFU, in which case an exit strategy must be implemented over the next year and a half, or;
- NOKUT does award ProTed a further five years funding as an SFU, in which case an exit strategy is still needed but over a different timescale.

We will begin by considering the first case of termination after the first five years.

ProTed's initial focus was to establish the centre, to initiate activity on the work packages and to start projects to involve colleagues within the two host universities. Although things have moved on from this initial phase, it appeared to the Expert Committee, from the documentation submitted, that little attention had been paid to an exit strategy. The Expert Committee was disappointed by the cursory

treatment of the question regarding legacy (“How will the work and achievements of your SFU continue after this five-year funding period?”) in ProTed’s mid-term self-evaluation. However, in interviews that took place during the site visit, it became clear that more thought had been given to the issue than was recorded in the self-evaluation document.

Senior management in the two universities indicated that they would draw on previous experience regarding the ending of Centre of Excellence funding (e.g. SFFs) to enable there to be an orderly ‘closure’ of the SFU. With regard to the actual work being undertaken by ProTed, the conclusion was that some of this work would continue – but inevitably at a slower pace and with the two universities working much more independently and less in partnership. However, the commitment to integration in teacher education would remain and initiatives such as University Schools would continue. If it was decided that ProTed would not continue for a further five years as an SFU then there would be a rapid change of focus of activity as the priority would be switched to writing up reports to ensure that, over the coming 1.5 years, the learning that has taken place to date is fully recorded.

For the second scenario of NOKUT agreeing to extend ProTed’s SFU status for a further five years, then the details regarding a strategy to establish the Centre’s legacy are quite vague. In terms of the closure of the centre, the same remarks apply as in scenario one, the universities will draw on experience in relation to the ending of other centres of excellence and the integration of staff into the wider university. However, the Expert Committee felt that more consideration was needed about the continuation of a ProTed legacy (even if the name and formal organisation of ProTed were to disappear).

As has been described in the previous section relating to Criterion 3: Impact, the leadership at both host universities is strongly supportive of ProTed and has put significant focus on teacher education (partly in response to national political agendas). In recent years, there has been growing recognition within the universities about the importance of teacher education as a university discipline. The strategic importance of the subject at both universities means that ProTed’s work is highly valued and this guarantees its legacy within both UiO and UiT.

Both universities have contributed additional funding to ProTed; at UiO this has enabled the introduction of the Mentor programme described earlier, whilst at UiT institutional funding has been focused on funding for additional PhD students. This is good evidence of the universities’ commitment to ProTed and an encouraging sign in terms of sustainability. The Expert Committee wishes to particularly endorse the mechanism introduced at UiO whereby all faculty new appointments in ILS have included in their contract a requirement to spend a specified amount of time working on ProTed activities. This will ensure that there is staff time available for further development work even when there is no further SFU funding. The University leadership appears committed to using ProTed’s work as a platform to inform their future work in teacher education, even after SFU status ends.

It was reported to the Expert Committee, that the SFU status of ProTed has created a momentum within both host institutions. Amongst other things, this has meant that other faculties and departments are more willing to collaborate with ProTed, than they have previously been, to work with teacher education. ProTed’s external recognition as an SFU gives it an endorsed quality standard and this is making it easier for ProTed to secure engagement (and internal funding) from faculties in projects

designed to enhance teacher education. It is anticipated that this momentum will continue past the termination of ProTed as an SFU.

ProTed is actively seeking funding for project activity for additional work which will complement SFU activity if ProTed continues as an SFU or which will enable some of the above momentum to be sustained if ProTed does not receive an extension to its SFU status. ProTed informed the Expert Committee that the following grant applications had been prepared:

- Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership: Co-operation for innovation and the exchange of good practices “Designs for Integrated Teacher Education Programs (DiTed)”
- FINNUT Innovation project in the public sector “Partnership in teacher education (PARTILU)”
- INTPART International partnership for excellence in education and research “Research, exploration and collaboration in teacher education (RECITE)”
- Inter-faculty application at UiT “Developing digital competence through using flipped classrooms at UiT”

3.5.2 Continuing Work – Second Period

ProTed have many ideas for how they will take their work forward should they be granted a five-year extension as an SFU. Some of these are set out in the mid-term self-evaluation, but the ProTed leadership spoke about these at much greater length, and with obvious enthusiasm, in meetings during the site visit.

A key theme for future work, which emerged from these discussions, was “synthesis”; that is, building on what has been achieved to date in specific projects and drawing them together so that a) they can have greater impact and b) they can have wider applicability.

A second important theme is further developing the students as researchers, particularly as researchers into their own practice. The master’s thesis provides an ideal focus to this, but earlier parts of the student experience should be creating this culture amongst the students and preparing them for practice-based research activity. ProTed’s experience should inform national policies and practice as Norwegian Teacher Education moves to five-year programmes.

Although ProTed has already been involved at a national level (as recorded in the previous section in relation to Criterion 3: Impact), the ProTed leadership stated that a clear aim of the second five years will be to play a much more significant role nationally. The argument that they presented was that a substantial amount of groundwork, in terms of developmental activity, underpinning research and theoretical validation, has been carried out which puts ProTed in a strong position to have a major impact nationally in the future.

This has implications for the nature of dissemination activity in the future. The forthcoming Knowledge Parliament in September 2015 will gather all the teacher education institutions in Norway to discuss the structure and content of excellent teacher education. It is anticipated that this will be the first of a series of Knowledge Parliaments, which will be organised in conjunction with others such as the Knowledge Centre for Education and NOKUT.

ProTed has recognised the success of the University School model and, whilst not seeking to recruit substantial numbers of additional University Schools, plans to develop the model further. As well as enhancing the benefits of the scheme, ProTed believes that, in view of the clear advantages that have already been delivered, this model should be rolled out to other institutions across the country.

Finally, ProTed wishes to build on the international links it has begun to develop during the first 3.5 years of being an SFU. This would become a two-way process with Norwegian teacher education being informed by the best international practice and teacher educators in other countries being inspired by the Norwegian approach, particular in terms of integrated, research-based, practice-relevant provision.

Work package 5 is the unifying work package, which will draw together the outcomes of the other four work packages. Given the nature of this work package, it inevitably follows behind the other work packages. Consequently, at this mid-term review, only 3.5 years into ProTed's programme of activities, it is still at an early stage of development. If ProTed does continue as an SFU for a further five years, WP5 will become the central work package of ProTed's activity.

3.5.3 Conclusions

The Expert Committee concluded that whilst ProTed has a basic exit strategy, plans to sustain the ProTed legacy are not well developed. On the other hand, plans for the direction ProTed would take if NOKUT agrees to a five-year extension of its SFU status are much more advanced. ProTed has also taken steps (such as applying for internal and external funding) to promote its sustainability.

The Expert Committee believes that ProTed's future work would be strengthened by greater strategic planning, in two areas in particular. The first is in relation to the sustainability of ProTed's legacy after it ceases to be an SFU. Sustainability planning, and indeed sustainability actions, should not be left until the last moment. Instead, sustainability planning should be carried out as soon as possible and work plans / projects should be designed in ways that contribute to ProTed's legacy. One area that should be urgently addressed is how the strength that comes through the partnership of two institutions, with different teacher education contexts and different expertise, can be maintained after the end of the SFU. The second is in relation to a strategic overview of the work to be carried out in the second five years, if this is granted. The first 3.5 years of ProTed have been marked by a large amount of diverse activity (for good tactical reasons), if ProTed continues then it will be important that there is a strategic plan which pulls this diverse activity together (quite possibly bringing some activities to an end) and ensures greater focus and coherence in what is taken forward.

3.6 Overall Summary and Recommendation

ProTed was awarded Centre of Excellence (SFU) status in 2012 based on the quality of education provided at both the University of Oslo and the University of Tromsø. In carrying out its mid-term evaluation of ProTed, the Expert Committee was pleased to find many areas in which ProTed had either further enhanced already existing good practice or had initiated new activity that appears to be raising the standard of their educational provision.

In the Expert Committee's opinion, ProTed's greatest success during its time as an SFU has been the extension and further development of the University School scheme. In the first instance, this is an example of transfer of good practice from one institution (Tromsø) to the other (Oslo) within the ProTed collaboration. It is clear that the University School concept has been whole-heartedly embraced at Oslo and that improvements to the scheme have been initiated there as well as at Tromsø. Participation in the University School scheme has led to the schools being more research-informed and more self-evaluative. University Schools are a shining example of successful integration of theory, practice and research – a fundamental goal of ProTed.

At both institutions, ProTed is clearly responsive to the student voice. A good example of this can be seen in the way that Oslo has responded to some disappointing results in the *Studiebarometeret*. Discussions that the Expert Committee held with students revealed that a key area of dissatisfaction for students who are now in the later stages of their course was the lack of identity as trainee teachers during the early years of the course. The first year students did not share this concern because initiatives had been taken to address this issue. Key responses here included the introduction of the mentor scheme with additional subject based seminars, only for teacher education students, led by practising teachers (from University Schools) which focused on pedagogy relevant to the subject material being studied. Furthermore, at Tromsø, there are examples of ProTed not simply responding to issues raised by students but rather working in partnership with students to address these issues. Examples of this include the provision of funding for students to organise whole day workshops and conferences on topics such as dyslexia and latest developments in ICT.

The mentor scheme which has been introduced for first year students at Oslo was spoken of very highly by students. Indeed, the students from later years were extremely disappointed that the scheme was not in existence in their first year of study. The only criticism the Expert Committee heard from the students about this scheme was that it was optional rather than compulsory and that this has led to some students regarding it as not particularly important, when the reality is just the opposite. Whilst the Expert Committee understands there are structural barriers to making the scheme compulsory, it is hoped that the ProTed team will find a way to overcome these hindrances.

ProTed has deliberately sought the involvement of a range of staff from across the two institutions. One way it has gone about doing this is through the provision of "seed corn funding" to initiate projects to enhance the experience of teacher education students. This strategy of promoting engagement through the provision of small amounts of funding appears to have been successful in generating a wide range of activity and involvement with ProTed. Some projects, such as *The Multilingual Classroom*, have shown some very promising early results and led to conference papers and publications.

Within Work Package 3: Web-based learning, ProTed has made some significant achievements. The 'digital exam' is another example of the transfer of good practice between the institutions within ProTed (from Oslo to Tromsø). The development of approaches to e-supervision using tablets is also very promising and could potentially have significant impact across the country, particularly as teacher education moves to five-year master's programmes.

ProTed has been active outside the two host institutions. There has been a major focus on writing, presenting and publication. An anthology is almost complete and this should be a significant addition to the literature relating to integration in teacher education. Although much of this dissemination to

date has been ‘dissemination for information’, there are signs that ProTed is beginning to move its dissemination up a level to ‘dissemination for action’. The Knowledge Parliament initiative in collaboration with the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Education appears very promising in this regard and ProTed confirmed during the mid-term evaluation visit that further knowledge parliaments are planned.

ProTed has also taken the international dimension of its work very seriously and has developed a number of partnerships with international organisations. The Expert Committee heard a very favourable assessment of ProTed’s work and its potential international impact from a member of ProTed’s international advisory group.

The Expert Committee were impressed by the strong support for ProTed from senior management within both institutions. It is clear that senior managers at Oslo and Tromsø are fully committed to ProTed, both in terms of its work within teacher education and as an SFU that can have an effect on the quality of teaching across the institution beyond teacher education. This commitment is made in a number of ways, including through substantial financial contribution. The Expert Committee would particularly wish to highlight the practice adopted at Oslo where all new staff appointments in teacher education have a contractual obligation to spend a portion of their time working with ProTed.

In view of the evidence of good practice identified from the scrutiny of reports and ProTed’s self-evaluation document, and observed by the Expert Committee during their visits to Oslo and Tromsø and, **the Expert Committee unanimously and unreservedly recommends to the NOKUT Board that ProTed’s status as an SFU be extended for a further five years.**

In addition to the successes of ProTed during its time as an SFU, there is a national need for a centre of excellence to support teacher education throughout Norway as the sector adapts to the new framework requiring five-year master’s courses. ProTed’s experience to date means it should be able to fulfil this role successfully. Its structure as a collaboration between two institutions with different backgrounds (and being helpfully positioned geographically) should also help ProTed to be successful.

As mentioned in the introduction to this evaluation, the Expert Committee has made a cumulative judgement across all criteria and facets within each criterion. As is to be expected, ProTed’s performance across all these different areas is not uniform. Whilst there are many ‘high spots’, there are a small number of areas where the Expert Committee wishes to make developmental recommendations which it feels can help ProTed to be even more successful as an SFU, particularly looking to the ten-year (as opposed to the initial five-year) time horizon.

The Expert Committee would encourage the ProTed leadership, supported by the ProTed Board, to develop a new strategic plan which focuses more on issues of impact and legacy. This should contain a renewed focus on ‘dissemination for action’, purposefully seeking to share good practices developed at ProTed to other institutions throughout Norway in a more proactive way than simply publishing and presenting (important though these are). This new strategic plan should also ensure that ProTed begins now to plan for and engage with what is to happen after year 10, considering such questions as whether or not the ‘ProTed brand’ will continue after SFU status and funding is completed. In particular, ProTed should explore ways in which its strengths, one of which is undoubtedly the partnership between colleagues at Oslo and Tromsø, can be maintained.

Within the new strategic plan, the Expert Committee would recommend that the ProTed leadership consider Work Package 1: Quality practices to be developed. The original SFU proposal stated that within this work package five high quality practices are to be chosen and then “investigated, evaluated, improved and integrated in the teacher education study design”. For reasons that the Expert Committee understands, relating to securing engagement with ProTed goals across the host institutions, Work Package 1 has to date been more diffuse than ‘five high quality practices’ and has supported a large number of projects across a wide range of themes. The Expert Committee believes it is important that in its next phase, ProTed concentrates on a small number of strategically important practices (not necessarily five but certainly a small number) and does indeed ‘investigate, evaluate, improve and integrate’ these practices not only within Oslo and Tromsø but in teacher education in Norway.

The Expert Committee also believe that a re-focusing of Work Package 3: Web-based learning could bring about greater impact for ProTed looking to the medium- and long-term. There is a need to focus on ways of developing trainee teachers’ pedagogic digital competence⁶ (and indeed to define professional standards for teachers generally in terms of their pedagogic use of ICT). There are small signs that ProTed is beginning to engage with this agenda (for example, new assignments in Tromsø where students must submit lesson plans built around the use of ICT to facilitate learning and then, as a follow-up, actually implement these lessons during their placement in schools). However, it appeared to the Expert Committee that this work was still in its very early stages and not strategically planned. This is another area in which ProTed has the opportunity to provide a great service to teacher education throughout Norway.

The above are developmental suggestions, which the Expert Committee believes should enable ProTed to build on its success to date. They should be seen as signs of the Expert Committee’s confidence in ProTed and its potential to make a significant impact across Norway and beyond. **To re-iterate, the Expert Committee unanimously and unreservedly recommends that ProTed’s status as an SFU be extended for a further five years.**

⁶ By ‘pedagogical digital competence’ we mean student teachers’ capability to use ICT in a way that enhances their pupils’ learning (we do not simply mean ICT competence, which is something that graduates of any discipline should have).

4 Decision

ProTed tildeles SFU-status for en andre periode, det vil si fra 2017–2021.

NOKUT og ProTed inngår en ny avtale for denne perioden.

NOKUT forventer at ProTed inkluderer komiteens anbefalinger i sitt videre arbeid.

English translation of the Board's decision:

ProTed is awarded SFU status for a second period; that is from 2017–2021.

NOKUT and ProTed will enter into a new agreement for this period.

NOKUT expects that ProTed includes the Committee's recommendations in its future work.

Appendix 1: Criteria for Mid-term Evaluation

Criteria for mid-term evaluation of Centres of Excellence in Higher Education

The main areas of focus in the mid-term evaluation are (I) the goals of the SFU scheme, (II) the goals that the centre put forward in the application, and (III) the impact that the Centre has had. In addition, an assessment of the sustainability aspect will be included. See the elaboration of each area below.

The assessment should be evidence-based, meaning that the Committee should ask for evidence where claims are not substantiated in the evaluation materials provided to the Committee.

I. The goals of the SFU scheme

The SFU arrangement shall:

- stimulate universities and colleges to establish and develop academic communities that provide excellent education
- contribute towards knowledge-based analysis and development of teaching and learning work as a tool for quality improvement and innovation in higher education institutions
- contribute towards good relations between the educational and other relevant societal and professional fields
- contribute towards the development and dissemination of knowledge.

An SFU must therefore:

- provide excellent R&D-based education
- develop innovative ways of working with R&D-based education
- contribute to the development and dissemination of knowledge about educational methods that are conducive to learning.

An SFU should be outstanding at the time of the awarding of SFU status; both in terms of the documented quality of its established educational provision and in terms of its centre plan. For the mid-term evaluation, this means that the Committee should assess whether the documented quality of the study programmes remains outstanding or, ideally, even more outstanding at this point. This is assessed in comparison with other communities within the same educational area, nationally and internationally.

The Committee should look into the organisational structure, leadership and other infrastructural framework elements concerning the centre. To what extent has the centre succeeded in becoming a well-functioning unit and is the centre's organisation suitable for reaching the goals of the SFU scheme and the centre's own goals?

The SFU scheme particularly aims at stimulating and rewarding the work that takes place in the interaction of students, teachers, support services and the knowledge base of the educational activities. This means that the Committee should emphasize whether the centre offers excellent and innovative R&D-based education. It should also look into the ways in which students are included in centre activities and decisions.

For educational programmes aiming at specific professions, relations with the professional field will be of central importance. How does the centre interact with the professional field and in what way does this interaction benefit the students?

For the mid-term evaluation, additionality will also be a central issue. This means that the centre should be able to show the Committee that without the SFU funding, their development/results would not have been possible. Additionality is a prerequisite for recommendation of further SFU status.

II. The goals that the centre put forward in the application

The Committee will assess to what extent the centre has achieved the goals put forward in its application. The Committee should assess each of the stated goals. In addition, the Committee should assess to what extent the centre has reached its overall vision.

Not everything has to have gone according to plan. There is room for so-called glorious failures, but the Committee should look into the reasons behind such failures, how the centre has dealt with them and what changes have been made to the centre plan.

III. The impact of the centre

The third area of the mid-term evaluation is the impact that the centre has had both within and across disciplines. For the assessment of impact, the Committee should look at the different levels; the institutionally, nationally and internationally.

The centre should be able to document the impact of its activities. A critical point is how they evaluate impact and what reflections they have made and actions they have taken, based on such evaluations.

To enable the Committee to evaluate the centre's impact, there should be a "baseline" to compare the present situation with. If the centre does not provide such a baseline in the evaluation materials, this should be addressed at the site visit.

In relation to dissemination activities, the Committee should not only look at the number or characteristics of activities, but to what extent they have actually led to action/improvement (c.f. Harmsworth and Turpin 2000).

IV. Sustainability

During the evaluation process, the Committee should look at the sustainability of the centre and its results. The centre should have plans for the termination of the centre and for the continuation of knowledge and good practice developed within the centre (exit strategies). Furthermore, the centre should have plans for the next period should SFU status be prolonged. How do they plan for the continuing development of excellence?

Appendix 2: Presentation of the Expert Committee

Professor Jeppe Bundsgaard, Aarhus University

Professor Bundsgaard is at the Department of Education at Aarhus University, and concerned in particular with the study programme in didactics and Danish. His research concerns communicative competences, especially ICT and didactics, especially in Danish as a subject in schools and in an international perspective. His competence in ICT in teacher education and schools is relevant for ProTed's work package on digital learning environments. His involvement in projects with partner schools is relevant for ProTed's work with University Schools.

Professor Duncan Lawson, Newman University (Chair)

Professor Lawson is Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Formative Education at Newman University, Birmingham. Lawson chaired the international Committee that assessed application for SFU status in 2013 and he is now part of the SFU MatRIC's advisory board. Hence, his knowledge of the SFU scheme is extensive. Furthermore, Lawson has experience from the British Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) where he led one of the most successful centres, Sigma. Lawson was previously Director of the Higher Education Academy, and has taken part in several international Expert Committees related to education and mathematics education.

Professor Elaine Munthe, University of Stavanger

Professor Munthe has thorough knowledge of Norwegian teacher education. She has been chair of the follow-up group for the reform of teacher education in Norway, by appointment of the Ministry of Education and Research. Furthermore, she has been a board member for different programmes for the Norwegian Research Council. She is professor in pedagogics from the University of Oslo, but has been at the University of Stavanger (and its predecessors) for about 20 years. Munthe is currently Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Education, which includes the University's teacher education programmes, and previously she was Head of the Department of Education and Sports Science.

Student Espen Tangnes, University of Bergen

Tangnes is a student at the integrated teacher education programme (lektorutdanning) in natural sciences at the University of Bergen. He started his education in 2011. Since spring 2013, he has been a student representative, and he contributes to, among other things, the organization of a seminar series. Tangnes was a student representative in a cross-facultary working group on the implementation of new regulations in the integrated teacher education.

Senior Research Associate Don Westerheijden, University of Twente

Dr. Westerheijden is Senior Research Associate at the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), University of Twente, where he has been since 1988. In his position at CHEPS, he coordinates research, including doctoral students. His own research interest is institutional and systematic impacts of internal and external evaluation of educational quality in Europa. This relates to the Bologna process, ranking (U-Multitrack) and methodological issues of policy evaluation, case studies and comparative research. Westerheijden takes part in CHEPS' Training & Consultancy, with projects for governmental bodies and higher education institutions in Europe, Asia and Africa. His experience from evaluation in higher education in different parts of the world is extensive.

Appendix 3: List of the Evaluation Material

Agreements

- Agreement between NOKUT and UiO
- Consortium agreement

Application and assessment of application

Application:

- Application document
- Budget
- Electronic application form
- Finance plan
- List of work packages
- ProTed overview
- Supplemental documentation
- Timeline and milestones

Assessment:

- Assessment of applications – first round
- Assessment of applications – final round

Annual reports

2012:

- Report
- Organization chart
- Financial accounts and budget
- Personnel
- Letter of submission

2013:

- Report
- Personnel
- Board presentation on resources spent
- Print from the accounting system
- Publications
- Letter of submission

2014:

- Report
- Personnel

- Board presentation on resources spent
- Print from the accounting system
- Publications
- Matrix
- Letter of submission

Self-evaluation

- Self-evaluation document
- Self-evaluation matrix

Study plans (learning outcome and structure of the programme)

UiO – Teacher Education Programme 8-13:

- 2011/2012
- 2014/2015

UiT – Teacher Education Programme 1-7:

- 2011/2012
- 2014/2015

UiT – Teacher Education Programme 5-10:

- 2011/2012
- 2014/2015

Other documents

- Criteria for the mid-term evaluation
- Report on the perceived quality of the ProTed-programmes
- Standards, Guidelines and Criteria for the assessment of [SFU] applications
- ProTed's website: <http://www.uv.uio.no/proted/>
- From ProTed 4 June: Information about plans for the future (including four applications for funding)
- A first draft of ProTed's edited volume
- Presentation of the first cohort of master thesis at UiT The Arctic University of Norway
- ProTed's Facebook presence

Appendix 4: Groups Interviewed During the Site Visit

- ProTed Leadership
- Leadership, UiO
- ProTed Administration
- National Knowledge Centre for Education and University Centre for Information Technology (USIT)
- Student representatives, UiO
- Students, UiO (two groups)
- Academic staff, ProTed UiO
- Affiliated academic staff, UiO
- WP leaders, ProTed UiO
- University Schools, UiO (two groups)
- Leadership, UiT
- WP leaders, ProTed UiT
- Academic staff, ProTed UiT
- Affiliated academic staff, UiT
- University Schools, UiT (two groups)
- Students (two groups)
- Visit and presentation FutureLab.
- The Norwegian Centre for ICT in Education
- Scientific Advisory Board
- Student representatives, UiT