

The Faculty of Law

Strategic Action Plan 2023-2026

Adopted by the Faculty Board 12.12.2022

I. Background and faculty activities

The faculty will be a visible and key contributor to promoting the rule of law and legal expertise in society. The faculty will be a powerhouse for legal knowledge with an extensive regional, national and international professional network.

Through research, education and dissemination, the faculty will develop and share legal knowledge of high international quality within the breadth of law-related subjects, with a particular focus on the Arctic and the High North. The faculty will be an international leader within law of the sea and environmental law, Sámi and indigenous peoples' law, and quality of education.

The rule of law, open and controlled exercise of power, free expression of opinion and respect for the rights and human dignity of the individual are core values in a democratic state governed by the rule of law, and for the faculty's activities. The faculty's activities will continue to be conducted in accordance with UiT The Arctic University of Norway's core values, which are based on credibility, academic freedom, closeness, creativity and involvement.

The work at the faculty will be characterised by unity and teamwork. All employees at the faculty therefore have a shared responsibility to work towards fulfilling the objectives of this strategic action plan. Central to this work is a strengthening of academic collaboration through the research groups in order to promote good and attractive academic environments, contribute to more high-quality publications, an increasing degree of international collaboration and publication, as well as external funding of research projects.

In order to fulfil the ambitions in the faculty's action plan and to meet increasing competition, the most important objective is to retain the permanent academic staff and also recruit more people to permanent academic positions.

II. Strategic areas of focus

II.1 The Arctic and the High North

UiT will be at the international forefront when it comes to knowledge and competence about and for the Arctic and the High North.

In order to achieve this ambition, the faculty will:

Develop more leading academic communities at the international forefront of knowledge development:

The Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea has an academic community that is an international leader in legal matters related to the management, conservation and use of the sea, coast and marine environment, not only in the Arctic, but also internationally. The research group for Sámi and indigenous peoples' law is in the process of developing a leading academic community. Other research groups at the faculty can also contribute to the development of knowledge and expertise about and for the Arctic and the High North. Therefore, the faculty will:

- Work to ensure that the Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea continues as a leading knowledge provider, for example by obtaining future funding, retaining key employees and recruiting new employees.
- Work to ensure that the research group for Sámi and indigenous peoples' law further develops into an internationally leading knowledge provider, for example by increasing the number of permanent academic staff with expertise in Sámi and indigenous peoples' law, and also increasing the proportion of external funding for PhD positions.
- Develop and support initiatives from other research groups that can promote other relevant legal knowledge and expertise about and for the Arctic and the High North.

Further develop attractive programmes of study adapted to trade and industry and civil society in the High North:

Our educational programmes contribute to a wide range of legal expertise and knowledge that is relevant to the business sector and civil society in the north. They include a five-year integrated master's degree programme in law (300 ECTS), a master's degree programme in law of the sea (90 ECTS), a master's degree programme in environmental law (joint Nordic degree) (120 ECTS), and a PhD programme in law (180 ECTS). In addition, the faculty contributes to several programmes of study at other faculties, such as the master's degree programme in Governance and Entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas, the master's degree programme in Indigenous Studies, and the experience-based master's degree programme in Ocean Leadership. The Faculty will:

- Work to ensure that educational programmes are developed and renewed so that they are of high quality and respond to the needs of civil society and the business sector in the region.
- Gradually develop relevant continuing and further education programmes in accordance with the faculty's capacity.

Strengthen competence about and for Sámi and Kven conditions:

The faculty has good expertise in Sámi legal matters through long-term focus on Sámi and indigenous peoples' law within the fields of research, education and dissemination. Expertise regarding rights to land and natural resources is particularly strong. This focus will continue, and the faculty will strengthen expertise through:

- Increasingly integrating Sámi legal issues within several areas of law.
- Contributing to the development of Sámi as a legal language.

Push for cooperation in the Arctic and the High North:

The faculty collaborates with a number of educational and research institutions on Arctic issues, and will:

- Further develop the collaboration by entering into more agreements on the exchange of academic staff and students, research collaboration and participation in professional/academic networks.

II.2 The major societal challenges

Ambition: UiT will contribute to developing innovative, democratic and sustainable solutions for major societal challenges.

To achieve our ambition, the faculty will:

Practice open science:

In accordance with UiT's policy, the faculty already practices open science in research, and will continue to do so in the future. In addition, the faculty will work towards:

- Sharing learning resources internally at UiT and in collaboration with national and international partners where appropriate.

Develop knowledge, methods and instruments that contribute to solving major societal challenges:

UiT's strategy highlights climate and the environment, food security, demography and health as some of the major societal challenges facing our modern society. These also challenge national and international legal systems, and it is important that the solutions to the legal challenges are addressed at an early stage of the restructuring process, and in ways that best safeguard all relevant considerations and interests. Societal challenges also require that our educational programmes are future-oriented. The Faculty will:

- Contribute knowledge about the role of legal developments in the restructuring that civil society and the business sector must undergo in order to meet the major societal challenges.
- Contribute knowledge about how legal regulation can contribute to sustainable and fair nature and resource management.
- Contribute knowledge about the legal framework for the utilisation of new technological solutions, including data protection.
- Contribute knowledge about how legal regulation can help safeguard the rights of individuals related to welfare, health and participation in society.
- Educate candidates who have the ability to identify, critically analyse and propose measures to deal with current and future societal challenges.
- Ensure that students are made familiar with both national and international legal perspectives.

Promote interdisciplinarity, co-creation and innovation:

The faculty already participates in interdisciplinary collaboration on research and education, and will continue to do so. The faculty will work to promote:

- Participation in interdisciplinary collaboration and cooperation with working life for mutual benefit, within the fields of research and education, to help meet the major societal challenges.

- Critical re-thinking regarding established doctrines and legal methods, which can contribute to law taking on a more prominent role in the process of restructuring so as to meet major societal challenges.
- The initiation of pedagogical development work in collaboration with others, internally as well as externally.

Strengthening our capacity and adaptability:

The faculty needs more academic staff to meet the research and education needs that result from the ambitions in UiT's strategy leading up to 2030. In order to strengthen capacity and adaptability, the Faculty will work to:

- Increase the number of academic staff so that the ratio between academic man-years and the number of students approaches the average for UiT, and ensure adequate administrative support services and capacity.
- Increase the proportion of research and education financed by external funds.

II.3 Talent development and diversity

Ambition: UiT will be a centre for developing competence and talent of student and staff with diversity as a driving force and resource:

To achieve our ambition, the faculty will:

Develop, attract and retain talents:

The faculty will have a stable and skilled academic and administrative staff that covers the research, education and dissemination mission. In light of increasing competition for academic staff, the Faculty will work to:

- Further develop its research communities to ensure that they are nationally and internationally visible, exciting and attractive and provide good development opportunities (individually and collectively).
- Offer competitive pay and working conditions for all employees.
- Make an academic career attractive to our master's students, lecturers and doctoral research fellows.
- Ensure that recruitment positions are regularly announced.
- Facilitate career and work planning that ensures individual employees a good balance between the various duties that make up the position, where expectations regarding the performance of the position are clarified, and that safeguard the individual when transitioning to new positions (for example, from doctoral research fellow to associate professor, and from associate professor to professor)
- Ensure that administrative positions within the fields of research and education are meritorious, when applying for R&D sabbaticals and in local pay negotiations, within the frameworks provided by UiT's pay policy.

Recruit and equip students for lifelong learning:

The Faculty has a good number of applicants for its educational programmes. The educational programmes are designed to ensure that master's degree students and PhD students develop the characteristics and expertise required to take on future responsibility through critical reflection and the ability to innovate. In addition, the Faculty will:

- Make the educational programmes, and their distinctive character, qualities and the Faculty's activities and advantages, well known among potential applicants and working life, in Northern Norway, nationally and internationally.
- Maintain and further develop the good and academically strong link that exists between students and the academic communities.
- Help ensure that educational programmes promote the development of future responsibility of the candidates, such as curiosity and critical reflection.
- Gradually develop continuing and further education programmes, in addition to existing programmes that include the experience-based master's programme Ocean Leadership.

Prioritise knowledge development and innovative dissemination that promotes diversity:

A fundamental value for the University is that students and staff are active in the public debate. It is therefore important to protect academic freedom of expression. The Faculty will work to ensure that:

- The academic staff become increasingly active participants in the public debate, using research-based knowledge, which helps to promote a good debate culture and respect for the expressions of others.
- The academic staff actively use varied channels and instruments for academic and popular science dissemination.
- Good dissemination contributions are recognised through dissemination activities being meritorious when applying for R&D sabbaticals, and in local pay negotiations, within the framework provided by UiT's pay policy.

Further develop UiT's working, learning and study environments:

In order to recruit and retain both students and staff, it is important to maintain and develop the quality of study, learning and working environments. Therefore, the Faculty will facilitate and contribute to:

- A working environment that is inclusive, equal and adapted according to phase of life, and which is characterised by collaboration, trust and respect both within the faculty and as part of UiT.
- A study and learning environment that is safe, good and creative, and that stimulates student-active forms of learning, collaboration and involvement.

III. Risk assessment and measures

Risk management will be integrated into both the overarching long-term plan and the strategic long-term plans, and will provide the management teams at the various units with insight into the factors that may have a negative impact on the ambitions and therefore also a basis for deciding which measures to prioritise. The risk-reducing measures are incorporated into the annual plans/budgets, and an overall strategic risk assessment is presented in the annual report each year.

Risk* is assessed according to:

	Low risk
	Moderate risk
	High risk

Priority area	Risk factors	Risk*	Measure
All	Capacity challenges due to the size of the academic community	High	• Appointment to academic positions in accordance with budgets • Prioritise between important tasks
All	Increased competition for workforce and students	High	• Retaining and recruiting academic staff • Active career development • Ensure social relevance in the programmes of study • Intensify work on profiling, marketing and other visibility
All	Administrative support	Moderate	Ensuring adequate administrative capacity
All	Changes to the economic framework conditions	Moderate	• Active financial management • Ensure sufficient room for manoeuvre through external funding of research and education