



UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Program description

Master in Indigenous Studies

120 ECTS credits/Campus Tromsø

The program description has been approved by the board of Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education on 24.9.2025.

From autumn 2026



Study programme name	English: <i>Master's Programme in Indigenous Studies (MIS)</i> Bokmål: <i>Masterprogram i urfolksstudier</i> Nynorsk: <i>Masterprogram i urfolksstudiar</i>
Degree obtained	Master in Indigenous Studies
Target group	The programme: • is particularly relevant for students interested in local and global issues related to the (de)colonization, socioeconomic development, cultural revitalization, political empowerment, and rights of Indigenous peoples and cultures both in Sápmi and elsewhere. • recruits students internationally as well as from Norway and other Nordic countries. Students with an Indigenous background are particularly invited to apply.
Admission requirements, required prerequisite, recommended prerequisite knowledge	General academic admission requirements: Admission to the master's programme in Indigenous Studies requires a bachelor's degree (180 ECTS), or an equivalent qualification, with a minimum of 80 ECTS within social sciences, humanities, education, or the social practice of law. Applicants must have a minimum grade average comparable to a Norwegian C (2,5 or 3,0) in the ECTS scale. Specific academic admission requirements: A special interest in Indigenous issues is a precondition. Life or work experience related to Indigenous peoples and/ or studies will be an advantage. The programme aims to recruit both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students from all parts of the world. The admission of students from different countries and regions will be emphasized to ensure a varied student group. Admission is limited to 20 students. Language requirement: The programme is taught in English. Applicants must document adequate proficiency in English. This requirement does not apply to students who qualify for a Norwegian Higher Education Entrance Qualification (Generell studiekompetanse, GSK).

**The study
programme's
Learning Outcome**

Knowledge

The students will have:

- advanced knowledge of Indigenous issues, including similarities and differences based on the different cultural contexts and Indigenous geographies.
- advanced knowledge of the concepts of Indigenous peoples as used in areas of research and politics on global, national and local levels, and related scholarly and political debates;
- thorough knowledge of the history of the global Indigenous movement;
- general knowledge of the current situation of the Sámi and other Indigenous peoples;
- thorough knowledge of different scholarly theories and methods in the field of Indigenous studies, including the challenges posed by Indigenous methodologies;
- thorough knowledge of research ethics and the responsibility of the researcher.

Skills

The students will be able to:

- identify challenges that culturally diverse societies and their institutions face;
- identify and apply existing and relevant theories from the humanities and social sciences in their analyses;
- identify and use relevant methods to produce the data for an independently designed research project;
- compare the situation of Indigenous peoples in different historical and contemporary contexts;
- make oral presentations in seminars and other public settings.

General competence

The students will be able to:

- critically analyse and undertake research on the situation of Indigenous peoples based on the interdisciplinary approach to Indigenous studies;
- assess ethical challenges in research related to Indigenous peoples, and seek sustainable approaches;
- apply knowledge related to Indigenous peoples to advanced assignments and projects in various contexts;

	• apply project design and management skills to other topics and contexts; • use the terminology of Indigenous studies in communication on academic work both to specialists and to the general public; • combine different scholarly approaches to produce new knowledge.								
Academic content and description of the study programme	Academic content The Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education at UiT The Arctic University of Norway offers an international two-year graduate programme in comparative Indigenous Studies. The programme is taught in English and based on research conducted at UiT the Arctic University of Norway regarding the Sámi and other Indigenous peoples. During the two years of studies, students will take courses totalling 120 study points (ECTS credits). During the first year, students take mandatory and elective courses on content constituting the field of Indigenous Studies and its framing methodologies. The second year focuses mainly on the master's thesis in addition to a general course on sustainable innovation and one elective. The topic of the thesis is chosen based on the student's interests, relevance to topics of the MIS programme and to research being conducted at relevant and neighboring fields. Rationale: Globally, Indigenous peoples' voice is gaining strength, and an international movement of Indigenous peoples is getting momentum. The Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2007 further supports this cause. Despite these positive developments, most Indigenous peoples remain marginalised and seek political recognition and empowerment. Moreover, the natural resources on which they base their livelihoods are threatened. These developments, the historical experiences, and the contemporary context that Indigenous peoples experience across the globe are the thematic focus of this master's programme. The Sámi context is the point of departure for the programme.								
Table: programme structure	<table><tr><th>Semester</th><th>10 credits</th><th>10 credits</th><th>10 credits</th></tr><tr><td>1.</td><td>IND-3027 Indigenous Peoples: History,</td><td>IND-3028 Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination</td><td>IND-3029 Decolonising Research: Ethics and</td></tr></table>	Semester	10 credits	10 credits	10 credits	1.	IND-3027 Indigenous Peoples: History,	IND-3028 Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination	IND-3029 Decolonising Research: Ethics and
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		Diversity, and Internationalism		Indigenous Methodologies
	2.	SVF-3025 Methods in social research: An interdisciplinary approach	SOA-3006 Indigenous Culture, Resource Management, and Human Rights	HIF-3620 Indigenous Revitalization – Languages, Literature and Arts
	3.	Elective Course With a list of recommended courses	IND-3905 Thesis	TVR-3000 Sustainability and Innovation
	4.	IND-3905 Thesis	IND-3905 Thesis	IND-3905 Thesis
Learning activities, examination and assessment	The study programme uses a variety of teaching methods, and includes lectures, projects, peer learning, student presentations, teamwork, and mandatory assignments. These methods will help students to take an active role in the learning process. Teaching is organised either as blocks or on a regular weekly basis. Courses may include mandatory participation, assignments, or presentations. Detailed descriptions are given in each course description. Syllabi and reading lists are specified for each course and listed in the course catalogue. The type of examination is specified for each course. The evaluation is based on the A-F grading scale, where F stands for “fail”, or the Pass/Fail grading system.			
The study programme’s relevance	Job prospectives The Master's programme in Indigenous Studies introduces students to Indigenous Studies as a distinctly multidisciplinary field. The objectives of the programme include: • introducing students to the history and development of the global Indigenous movement; • familiarizing students with different disciplinary perspectives on human and indigenous rights, colonialism, decolonisation, culture and ethnicity, marginalization, political recognition and empowerment, governance, resource management and environmental change;			

- equipping students with skills and knowledge to critically analyse relations between local, regional, national and global levels, including the role of pan-national organizations such as the UN and ILO; and
- teaching students about interaction and unequal power relations between actors.

Possible prospects

Our graduates thrive in work fields that require understanding of global and local Indigenous issues, international experiences as well as analytical thinking, communication, and project implementation skills. The Master's programme prepares students for exciting careers in multiple academic, public and business environments. Job opportunities include:

- Research positions: conducting academic applied research into Indigenous issues;
- Policy: preparing and coordinating policy, advising and planning (UN, etc.)
- Implementation positions: serving as project manager or coordinator in local NGOs and other areas of the private sector
- Communication and media positions related to Indigenous issues

Academic Careers

The Master's programme provides an excellent foundation for pursuing a PhD in relevant fields, such as Political Science and Governance, Anthropology, Environment and Development Studies, Language, Cultural and Religious Studies, and Education, to name just a few. Many of our graduates have been successful in attaining competitive PhD positions and research fellowships.

Professional Careers

As a graduate from the Master in Indigenous Studies, you would gain general conceptual, critical and evaluative skills which are required in many senior jobs in the government and public sectors, civil society organizations, project management and education institutions. The skills to analyse public policy, plans and development projects make our graduates highly qualified candidates for working both in the public and private sectors at all levels, providing institutions and organizations with knowledge, critical thinking and advice in a wide range of processes.

The international nature of the programme connects our students in a global network that helps them develop a global outlook and competence to make high-level critical comparisons of Indigenous realities on the ground. As a graduate from the Master's in Indigenous

	Studies your in-depth analyses of Indigenous peoples own experiences locally, nationally and internationally could be of critical importance for Indigenous and marginalized communities worldwide. This expertise makes you qualified for work both with international and local stakeholders, contributing to frame, voice and disseminate their interests and concerns, and co-design suitable courses of action.
Work scope	Set curriculum makes a full-time study for 2 years, approximately 1500-1800 workhours per year.
For master's theses/independent work in master's degrees	See 'Academic content' above. Every student will be assigned a thesis supervisor in the first year of study. Supervision is given through seminars and individual tutorials. The students are expected to write a master thesis between 14.000 and 17.000 words of length (approximately 45 - 60 pages). The thesis totals 40 ECTS.
Language of instruction and examination	The programme is delivered in English, including all lectures, student assessments and examinations. This is further specified in each course description.
Internationalisation	The master's programme is international in its content and structure. All core courses include international/comparative content. The learning environment is truly international as the programme admits both Nordic and international applicants to each cohort.
Student exchange	The Master's degree programme in Indigenous Studies has bilateral exchange agreements with universities abroad. With approval, students may take modules elsewhere that will be included as part of the degree. The individual plan for the exchange must be approved by the Centre for Sami Studies. We make room for outbound student exchange in the 2nd and/or 3rd semesters.
Administrative responsibility and academic responsibility	The Centre for Sami Studies has the administrative and academic responsibility for the study programme. The Program Board has members from the other departments offering courses in the programme, as well as student representatives.
Quality assurance	The programme is evaluated according to the university's quality assurance system.

