

WELCOME!



Welcome to NLA University College! We are looking forward to have you as our student! Some of you might know some of our former students, others might be quite unfamiliar with both NLA and Norway. This pamphlet is an attempt to bring together some information that will be useful in your preparation for moving to Bergen and becoming a student at NLA.

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Chapter 1: About NLA University College

Norwegian Teacher Academy (NLA) was founded in 1966. Its roots are in the Norwegian lay Christian movement, which developed during the 19th century. NLA is one of the few private university colleges in Norway. In 2010, the name of the institution was changed to **NLA University College**.

In 2013, NLA University College merged with Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communication in Kristiansand, and University College Staffeldtsgate in Oslo. Today, NLA University College has about 2500 students in total.

NLA University College is owned by the following organizations:

- The Norwegian Mission Society
- Norwegian Lutheran Mission
- NorMission
- International Fellowship of Evangelical Students Norway
- Norwegian Sunday School Association
- Norwegian Inner Mission
- Evangelical Lutheran Free Church

We are committed to highly qualified teaching and research, and our exams are approved by the Ministry of Education and Research in Norway as equivalent to those of the state universities. The curricula and the teaching methods of NLA reflect a strong commitment to the education of persons who are able to assess

both the academic studies and the current trends and developments in society as a whole.

NLA University College is founded on Christian values, but students are not required to have any religious affiliation, nor are they asked about their religious views.

A nationwide Christian university college

NLA consists of four campuses. Two of them are located in Bergen, on the west coast of Norway, while one campus is in Kristiansand, in the very South of Norway and one is in Norway's capital, Oslo, in the East of the country.

In this pamphlet the campuses in Bergen are introduced more in detail. Campus Sandviken is conveniently situated in Sandviken, in the foothill of Sandviksfjellet (Mount Sandviken), a 10 minute bus ride to the north of the city centre. The campus is small, consisting of a building containing classrooms, administration offices, teachers' studies, chapel, library and a cafeteria to serve some 700 students a year. NLA Sandviken offers programs in Education, Religious Education and Intercultural Studies.

Campus Breistein offers teacher and pre-school teacher education. The campus is located 15 km north of the city centre. This spacious campus consists of the Learning Building, Teaching Building, Administration Building, "The glass building" and Study Building. Approximately 800 students are studying here.

Chapter 2: The City of Bergen



Bergen is the second largest city in Norway with a population of approx. 260.000, famous for its excellent harbour and access to the scenic fjord country. From the 13th Century, Bergen was the capital of Norway and until 1830s, it was Norway's largest city. Because of its coastline position, Bergen has had wide contact with other countries, and from the 1100s, Bergen was a renowned European city with visitors and trade ships from everywhere. Bergen is rich in

historical sites and interesting sights, and draws a large number of visitors every year. Bergen is surrounded by seven mountains, and from the top of one of these mountains (which is possible to reach on foot, by bike, cable cars or funicular), you get a great overview of Bergen, the fjords and islands. Bergen offers many opportunities for outdoor activities and recreation. Bergen is an academic city, boasting one state university, three state colleges, and

three private university colleges, which enrol many students, also international students, every year. Even though Bergen might seem small by international standards, the city manages to keep this local charm and as well, as offer a rich and pulsating life.

VisitBergen gives you more information about Bergen:

<https://en.visitbergen.com>

Chapter 3: How to get there

By plane

When arriving by plane you will arrive through Bergen International Airport (BGO). The airport is located approximately 20 km south-west of the city centre. For information about the airport, see:

<http://www.avinor.no/en/airport/bergen>.

There is an airport Express Bus right outside the entrance door of the airport, as well as the lightrail and taxis. There is an ATM at the airport; it is possible and advisable to withdraw Norwegian kroner when you arrive.

By train

When arriving by train you will come to Bergen Station. The station is located in downtown Bergen. The Bergen light rail (tram) stops right outside the railway station, the bus station is about 200 metres away, and there is a taxi stop right outside the station.

By car

It is possible to access Bergen by car from either South, East or North. Be aware that some of the streets in downtown Bergen are one-way streets

By boat/ferry

Being located on the coast, it is possible to access Bergen by sea. “Flaggruten” and

“Fjord1” have daily arrivals from both South and North. Three times a week the ferry comes from Denmark (Hirtshals) to Bergen. When arriving by boat or ferry, you will arrive in the centre of Bergen.

By bus

You may access Bergen with “Norway Bussekspress”. They have daily trips from East, South and North to Bergen.

How to reach the campus

The buses and the Bergen Light Rail (tram) make it easy to get around in Bergen. To get from downtown to NLA you may either walk or go by bus. Bus number 18 departs regularly from the city centre and stops right outside the entrance of Campus Sandviken, but buses number 3, 4, 5 also stops near the campus at Sandvikstorget. To get to Campus Breistein, you may take buses number 37, 210, and 300 from the busstation. Most students take the direct bus number 37. We recommend that you buy a bus pass.

See: <https://www.skyss.no/en/timetable-and-maps/buss/> for more information. Here you will find the app.

Chapter 4: Academics

Academic conduct

As a student at NLA, you should be well prepared for lectures and seminars. Read the necessary books/articles in advance, in order to actively participate in discussions in class.

Academic good practice is based on values such as openness, academic integrity and critical discussion. In Norway, the students are encouraged to participate in academic discussions and it is also acceptable to disagree with the teachers.

Presentation of other people's results, thoughts, ideas or formulations as if they were one's own is plagiarism and understood as a form of intellectual theft.

You must familiarize yourself with the exams regulations. Deadlines for signing up for exams and re-exams are to be respected. Read more here:

<https://www.nla.no/en/students/exams/before-exams/>

Books and library

You are expected to buy the books on the reading lists of your courses, at least the main literature. In addition to that, you are welcome to use the services of NLA's library which has a wide selection of publications, both books, articles and online journals. Books on the reading lists are also available in the library but because of the relatively small number of samples available and the short borrowing time, you should not count on using library books only.

Learning and information platforms

You are expected to familiarize yourself with the different information channels used at NLA.

StudentWeb: online registration service. All students must register at the beginning of the

semester, register for exams, find candidate number, check exam results – at [Pålogging - Studentweb \(fsweb.no\)](https://fsweb.no).

Canvas: Online learning platform where notes from lectures and other learning materials are published, as well as messages from academic staff. Log in here: [Login \(instructure.com\)](https://instructure.com).

Inspera: Online examination platform, used during home exam.

Important: You are supposed to read carefully all emails sent to you from NLA, and you must follow the instructions given in the emails.

Student welfare organisations

Student welfare organisations play an important role at academic institutions in Norway. Each city has its own student welfare organisation. The student welfare organisation in Bergen is called Sammen (it means "together").

Student welfare organisations run dormitories, cafes and restaurants, academic bookstores and gyms for students, even kindergartens for the children of the students. Many of them also offer different health services.

Membership is compulsory for all students at NLA. The membership fee is low compared to all the services you can get. Erasmus+ students are exempted from the fee. For more information please see www.sammen.no/en/bergen.

Please look here [Home - NLA](#) for more information to our international students at NLA.



Chapter 5: Official information

Immigration

All non-EU/EEA students who are planning to stay in Norway for more than 3 months, must apply for a study permit (residence permit) before arriving to Norway. If you are a citizen of an EU/EEA country, you do not have to apply for a residence permit, but you have to get registered at the police station after arrival. Nordic citizens (from Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland) do not have to go to the police station – they only need to report their moving to the National Registry (Folkeregisteret). For more information please see www.udi.no/en.

For students staying for less than 3 months, you might have to apply for a visitor's visa, depending on your citizenship. See UDI's website for more information.

Norwegian ID number

If you are going to stay in Norway for more than 6 months, you will get a Norwegian ID number some weeks after arriving to Norway. An ID number will allow you to open a bank account and get a personal doctor (GP). Read more about ID number here: [National identity number - UDI](#).

Health insurance

If you are planning to stay in Norway for more than 1 year, you will automatically become a member of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme (Folketrygden). This means that you are entitled to health services in Norway, and you pay the same, pretty moderate fees, as the Norwegian citizens.

If your stay in Norway is between 3-12 months, you should apply for a voluntary membership in the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme. The application or the membership does not cost anything but it is important that you apply immediately after your arrival in Norway.

Please notice that the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme is not valid during your trip to and from Norway. It also does not cover any medical costs if you visit other countries during your stay.

Read more here: [Membership of the National Insurance Scheme - nav.no](#).

If you stay in Norway for less than 3 months, you must buy a health insurance for your stay. This must be done before you come to Norway.

TB testing

The Norwegian health authorities require all international students arriving from countries with a high occurrence of tuberculosis to be tested for tuberculosis (TB). The test includes a chest X-ray and, in some cases, a blood sample. *Residence permits are not valid until final clearance from the health authorities has been given.* Read more here: [Countries with high occurrence of tuberculosis - NIPH \(fhi.no\)](#).

Health care services

Students staying for more than 6 months are entitled to get a personal doctor ("fastlege"). That means that if having health problems, you always go to the same doctor. "Fastlege" is a general practitioner (GP) that can refer you to a specialist if needed.

Students staying for less than 6 months are not entitled to a personal GP. These students may use the services of two medical centres that cooperate with the student welfare organisation Sammen. Read more here: <https://www.sammen.no/en/bergen/health/doctor>

When visiting a GP or a specialist, you must pay a consultation fee. Health services are however strongly subsidized by the Norwegian government and the real costs of the service you get are lot higher than the fee you pay.

Medications are bought at a pharmacist's. Mild medications such as pain killers may be bought without a prescription but stronger medicines such as antibiotics can only be bought with a prescription from a doctor.

Dentists are very expensive in Norway as they are not subsidized by the government as much as the GPs. If you need dental care, you should always check the price before you start a treatment.

Sammen offers dental services for lower prices than the private dental care centres:

<https://www.sammen.no/en/bergen/health/dentist>

Sammen also has a mental health care centre (SPH) that offers counselling and therapy. It is not uncommon that foreign students

Chapter 6: Practical information

Weather and clothes

The summers are mild with approx. 15-25 Celsius degrees. In the wintertime the temperature is normally from – 5 to +5 Celsius degrees.

In Norway, you will experience long days during the summertime and short days during the wintertime. In the height of summer, the sun rises at around four in the morning and sets at about eleven in the evening. In the depths of the winter, the sun rises nine thirty am and sets at about three thirty in the afternoon. Twilight makes it light a little longer, though. Whatever the season it is, weather in Norway is liable to change from day to day.

You can also buy practical and good clothes in Norway. The price level is quite high in Norway.

In Norway, the dress code is informal, even at universities and colleges. Professors and students alike wear informal clothes (jeans and sweater).

Currency and Economy

The Norwegian currency is called “kroner” (NOK). Most items can be purchased by using VISA card. Ask your bank if they charge any fees when you use your visa card abroad. You need a Norwegian ID number in order to open a bank account. Some places you can get discount if you have a valid student card.



experience challenges with a different culture, people, weather and different academic practices from what they are used to. No problem is too small to talk about. These services are free of charge. Read more here: [Someone to talk to? — Bergen \(sammen.no\)](#).

Norway is one of the most expensive countries in the world, and you will probably find the prices very high in comparison with prices in your home country. An estimate of an average student budget in Norway is about 9-10.000 NOK per month for most expenses including housing, food, study materials, transport and activities.

Here are some examples of what different items may cost in Norway:

Study-related fees:

- Tuition fee 1500 NOK per semester
- Semester fee (student welfare organisation): 500 NOK per semester
- Books: 1500-3500 NOK per semester

Living expenses:

- Housing: 3000-5000 NOK / month
- Food and daily expenses: 4000-5000 NOK / month
- Bus card: 700 NOK / month

Examples of other costs:

- Lunch at the student cafeteria: 60 NOK
- Dinner at a restaurant: 250 NOK
- Gym membership: 360 NOK / month
- Cinema ticket: 150 NOK

How to save money:

- Buy your groceries at the cheapest grocery stores such as Rema 1000 and Kiwi. Groceries at kiosks and petrol stations are quite expensive.
- Reasonably cheap clothing stores are H&M, Cubus, Dressmann and Sparkjøp.
- IKEA provides most of the things you need for your apartment for reasonable prices (bed linen, kitchen utilities etc.)

- Fretex is the biggest second-hand chain in Norway, owned by the Salvation Army. You can find books, glass, arts, clothes, sport equipment, bedclothes and so on.
- Check out www.finn.no. This is a popular webpage for selling, buying and donating various items. There are also different Facebook-groups for selling and buying second hand clothes and items.

Please notice that most stores and shopping centers in Norway are closed on Sundays.

Health and safety

Health and safety standards in Norway are generally very high. Tap water is generally of high quality and perfectly safe to drink anywhere unless warning is given. There is absolutely no need to buy water in bottle.

Chapter 7: Norwegian Culture

Food

Norwegians normally have three to four meals a day. We eat a simple breakfast before school/work. At this time, we also prepare our lunch consisting of sandwiches in a packed lunch (called 'matpakke'). We have a hot meal at around 5 pm, the dinner is the only hot meal during a day. A traditional Norwegian dinner consists of meat or fish and potatoes with sauce and vegetables. However, we get influences from all over the world; therefore, Norwegian families might as well make for example Italian or Asian food instead of the traditional Norwegian meals. Many, but not all, choose to have a light evening meal also, as the dinner is early. As dining habits are changing, many variations from the pattern appear.

There is a variety of restaurants in Bergen, with food from different parts of the world. Norwegians drink more coffee than anyone else in the world. In the past 20 years, the café culture has flourished in Norway, and in Bergen, you can find many nice cafés. On a student budget is quite expensive to dine out, but many students like to go out for a coffee.

NLA does not offer any meal plans. Students have to cater for themselves. It is possible to cook in the kitchen in your accommodation.

Norway has very low crime rate, most crimes are petty thefts and vandalism. Violent crimes are rare and visitors have no reason to worry about their personal security.

Norwegians are concerned with personal hygiene and cleanliness. It is not unusual to shower once a day.

The Norwegian nature is beautiful and free for anyone to explore. You should use the opportunity to enjoy the Norwegian nature, but note that you must take care of your own safety, there are generally no warnings or fences in the wilderness. Do not "push the limits" of the Norwegian nature. Check out www.ut.no for hiking tips.

Normally Norwegians bring a lunch package with sandwich and fruit for lunch. All NLA campuses have a cafeteria which serves baguettes, salads and a few hot dishes.

Grocery stores provide a wide selection of food items. If you miss some ingredients from your home country, you might want to try them in smaller shops that import more exotic food from abroad. You might miss a few items from your home country, but so far, our international students have managed to live and eat happily.



Language

In Norway, we have three official written languages: Bokmål, Nynorsk and the Sámi language. The majority of the people in Norway are using Bokmål, but in the North-western part

of Norway, Nynorsk is quite common too. Nynorsk and Bokmål are not classified as different languages where you have to learn the other as a foreign language; they are more like two different written norms.

We do not speak the text as it is written, but use local dialects. For Norwegians the dialect is an important part of our identity. By listening to a persons' dialect we can easily classify from which part of the country he/she is from.

Many foreigners find it difficult to understand the variety of Norwegian dialects, however, Norwegians understand and speak closer to the written language if they notice that you do not understand. Most Norwegians speaks good English, it is therefore an easy country to live and travel in. Most signs and announcements are, however, in Norwegian.

If you are interested in learning some Norwegian prior to your arrival, you should check out this free online Norwegian course:

<https://www.ntnu.edu/norwegiangcourse/norwegian-on-the-web>

Time

In Norway, it is very important to respect given deadlines and be on time for classes and appointments. Be always on time or 5 minutes early. For instance, if you do not make your doctor's appointment in time, you will probably need to pay for not showing up.

Emergency numbers:

Legevakt (casualty clinic / emergency room), open 24h: **116 117**

Ambulance (life-threatening emergencies): **113**

In case of fire: **110**

Police (urgent): **112**

Social life

Your first friends will probably be other international students. We will encourage you to try to get some Norwegian friends, too. It is said that Norwegians are a bit introvert and difficult to get to know but most Norwegians are generally friendly and welcoming towards foreigners, they just might need you to take the initiative to conversation.

NLA will arrange different social activities throughout the semester. We warmly encourage you to participate in these activities. The activities are ways to get an insight into Norwegian culture and traditions. A church, a sports club or other kind of activity where you meet other people regularly, are also places to start friendships.

At NLA we have a Buddy program. You as an international student will be paired up with a local NLA student. This is an opportunity for you to get to know local students and experience local culture. The Buddy program is voluntary, and you will get more information from the International office at NLA upon arrival.

You may also want to check the activities of international student organisations in Bergen.

- International Student Union (ISU)

<https://isu-norway.no/>

- Erasmus Student Network (ESN)

<https://esn.no/>