

A young man with blonde hair and a brown t-shirt is sitting on the left, looking down at a spiral notebook on a stone table. A young woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a black sweater and a gold necklace, is sitting on the right, smiling and looking at the notebook. She is holding a silver pen. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green grass and a wooden bench.

Strategy 2025-2029



NLA University
College

Innhold

Background

Social mission

Values and motto

Institutional profile

Current situation

Societal developments

A rapidly evolving institution

Strategic priority areas

- 1 Leading and visible R&D community
- 2 Study programmes with an institutional profile
- 3 A national social actor
- 4 A motivating and stimulating work and study environment

Vision – NLA 2029

Implementation and follow-up



Strategy 2025-2029

Background

NLA University College (NLA) was formed through two mergers in 2010 and 2013 of four former university colleges that operated with the same mission and collectively covered multiple disciplines and professions:

- Staffeldtsgate NLA College in Oslo (founded in 1916 as a bible school)
- Norwegian Teacher Training Academy (NLA) in Bergen (founded in 1968)
- Gimlekollen Media College in Kristiansand (founded in 1981)
- NLA Teacher Training College in Bergen (founded in 1995)

NLA upholds the legacy of these institutions and has evolved into a broad academic and geographically diverse institution, offering a varied range of programmes and courses, with approximately 3000 students and 320 staff.

Social mission

NLA's mission is to promote self-formation and equip students to make a meaningful contribution in their homes, workplaces and communities, while engaging critically and constructively with local, national and global challenges based on a Christian understanding of nature, humanity, culture and society. The belief that humans are created in the image of God and possess inherent, immeasurable worth is the foundation that stimulates compassion and social responsibility. NLA's core activities are to provide education, engage in research and development (R&D) and disseminate findings, guided by a commitment to quality and ethical awareness rooted in its academic and value-based foundation, and carried out within regulatory and statutory frameworks.

Values and motto

All people possess inherent worth. We therefore have an obligation to develop education and professional practices that benefit our fellow human beings. We are called on to be good role models and to promote all that is true and good, based on values such as commitment, loyalty, respect, forgiveness and trust. The Christian stewardship responsibility entails a calling to take social responsibility at all levels – from management of the earth's resources to supporting the upbringing and well-being of children. Guided by these values, NLA offers programmes characterised by self-formation and preparation for service under the motto: « - Because someone needs you».

Institutional profile

NLA is a distinct alternative within the higher education sector, characterised by:

- a social mission grounded in Christian values
- self-formation for responsible service in the home, workplace and community
- a broad and socially relevant range of programmes within an active research community
- an international orientation and campuses in several key regions
- an attractive work and study environment with close follow-up of students

Current situation

Societal developments

Societal developments set important parameters for NLA's operations and strategy. The following trends are particularly relevant:

- An ideological climate characterised by value pluralism, relativism and polarisation, but also greater openness to Christian faith and religiosity in general
- Digitalisation, artificial intelligence and growth in online courses that challenge both conceptions of knowledge and traditional teaching and learning methods, while physical presence remains crucial for a vibrant work and study environment
- Political signals of sustainable regional development that reinforce the need for a broad educational provision across all regions
- Demographic changes in the form of smaller student age cohorts, leading to increased competition for students. Meanwhile, many young people remain outside the working and student population, the need for continuing and further education is growing, and flexible study pathways are being developed.
- A higher education sector in which several university colleges have an ambition to achieve university status

A rapidly evolving institution

As the new strategic period begins, NLA is undergoing significant development, both academically and geographically:

- R&D output has increased, research expertise has been strengthened, and an application for a doctoral programme and the establishment of structured research training has been submitted to NOKUT.
- Student numbers reached a record high in autumn 2024. Meanwhile, the development is mixed, with a decline in teacher education programmes, growth in business and economics programmes, and increasing interest in attractive online courses and flexible programmes and courses.
- Campuses are changing: in 2024, teacher education programmes in Bergen moved to Kalfaret in the city centre, the Gimlekollen campus in Kristiansand was expanded, and a study centre for practical theology opened in Trondheim. In 2025, a complete renovation of the Staffeldtsgate campus in Oslo will begin, while a new business programme will be established in Stavanger.
- NLA offers a positive work and study environment. However, the national Student Survey indicates that NLA students spend less time on their studies than the sector average.

Strategic priority areas

1 Leading and visible R&D community

NLA aims to develop environments for research, academic development work and artistic research that have a strong national and international profile and attract external funding. A doctoral programme with an institutional profile will be founded on a sustainable academic and financial basis, paving the way to university status.

- A doctoral programme will be established with a distinctive institutional profile and satisfactory completion rates.
- Success in externally funded projects will be increased through strengthened support functions offering grant-writing expertise, information on relevant calls for proposals, and development of preliminary projects.
- Clearly defined expectations regarding research group affiliation and collaboration on joint projects relevant to NLA's profile and doctoral initiatives will position the research groups as hubs for project proposals.
- Initiatives that foster increased production and visibility of academic development work and artistic research will be further developed.
- The library and R&D administration will be strengthened as support functions for R&D activities, and a separate action plan will further enhance the library's role as a research library.
- Research output, measured in publication points, will be higher than the average for Norwegian university colleges, with at least 20% of published works at level 2 over time and an increased scope of international co-authorship.
- Artistic research will be on a par with leading academic environments at comparable institutions.
- At least 15% of research staff should have leading expertise, and together with researchers formally qualified for associate professor/professor positions, should make up at least 60% of academic full-time equivalents.

2 Study programmes with an institutional profile

To fulfil its social mission in competition with other higher education institutions, NLA will offer attractive study programmes with an institutional profile. The growth in online courses and digital communication calls for new approaches to preserving and strengthening the close relationship between students and staff, which is a hallmark of NLA.

- The academic breadth of the existing programmes and courses will be maintained. A new course structure with more courses taught in English and cross-programme courses will be considered.
- The significance of NLA's objects clause will be evaluated for all departments and their associated educational and research fields, and the institutional profile across different activities will be clearly defined.
- Self-formation, internationalisation, relevance to practice, ethics and social responsibility will be taken into account in the planning and descriptions of all study programmes.
- NLA will strengthen its role as an attractive developer and provider of flexible and online study programmes.

3 A national social actor

NLA will consolidate its position as an attractive educational option in various regions and establish itself as a national actor by creating new campuses. Outward-facing communication will be strengthened to highlight NLA as a national institution with strong regional ties.

- A comprehensive communications strategy for reputation building and outreach will make NLA a more prominent voice in scholarly and public debate, informed by research and values.
- Targeted efforts will be made to foster strong relationships with prospective students and staff, the media and other social actors relevant to NLA's aims.
- NLA will engage proactively with society, building partnerships with local authorities, businesses, voluntary organisations, and arts and cultural institutions.

4 A motivating and stimulating work and study environment

NLA will foster a motivating and stimulating environment in which students and staff can achieve academic success and develop through collaboration, active participation, trust-based leadership and modern infrastructure. The work and study environment shall foster academic and personal growth, enhance the institution's appeal to prospective students and staff, and attract national and international collaboration partners.

- Student welfare and collaboration with the student council will be further developed, and students' participation in all aspects of quality assurance will be strengthened.
- Study-support measures that promote timely progression will be implemented, and consideration will be given to increasing the number of mandatory components.
- Teaching quality will be enhanced through pedagogical development, with a focus on student-led learning methods, digital tools, research on teaching and learning, and the systematic sharing of experiences.
- The proportion of students who select NLA as their first choice will be increased through targeting new groups, closer collaboration with owner organisations, and active promotion of study abroad opportunities in recruitment efforts.
- The chapel and counselling service on campus will be strengthened to ensure that students and staff are invited into an environment that promotes self-formation, builds Christian faith and provides space for open dialogue.
- NLA's core values will shape leadership practices, development processes, forms of collaboration, personnel policies and arenas for participation.
- Internal communication will be improved, departmental responsibilities clarified, and administrative staff supported in developing their skills to ensure professional responses to new demands.
- All departments at NLA will explore the use of artificial intelligence in administrative or research functions to gain knowledge, improve outcomes and reduce costs.
- Additional partnerships with international institutions will be established to strengthen NLA's distinctive profile, increase student and staff mobility, and promote collaboration in education and R&D.

Vision – NLA 2029

- NLA is a national institution with a clear Christian value profile, strong regional ties and extensive international collaboration.
- NLA conducts basic and applied research, as well as academic development work and artistic research at a consistently high level, with notable growth in externally funded projects.
- A doctoral programme with a distinctive institutional profile and satisfactory completion rates has been established, and NLA is preparing for the transition to university status.
- NLA offers varied, flexible and high-quality programmes and courses, reflecting its distinctive institutional profile.
- The work and study environment is attractive, with well-equipped facilities and modern digital infrastructure that attract motivated students and highly qualified staff.
- NLA educates responsible, competent students who are attractive in the labour market and well equipped to address societal challenges – locally, nationally and globally.
- The organisation operates effectively at all levels, with strong academic and administrative expertise, ensuring work of the highest quality.

Implementation and follow-up

- The ambitions and goals in the strategy are detailed in action plans, which are evaluated annually.





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College**

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