

Nordic Summer University | Strategy Plan | 2020-2023

The Nordic Summer University (NSU) is an independent nonprofit organisation founded in 1950 to support multidisciplinary research enquiries and scholarly networks across national borders. NSU operates as a nomadic institution and organises 16-20 symposia and events each year in the Nordic and Baltic region.

NSU is rooted in the values of equality, inclusion, and sustainability. We promote learning and cultivation of the self, informed by the Nordic heritage of folkbildning and self-organisation, with its investments in open-access education and collaboration through participation and active citizenship.

NSU's study program supports emerging research initiatives and the development of topics related to the cultivation of healthy and inclusive democratic societies. The community of NSU fosters an environment and infrastructure of lifelong learning, self-governance, and active citizenship through building international open access networks between academia and civil society. NSU encourages the development of long-term networks with flexible and diverse thematic research agendas and facilitates research experience and networking opportunities for people from different parts of society. Through its activities NSU establishes a public space for critical discourse and creative exploration among diverse members of the Nordic and Baltic regions, including university scholars, students, artists, independent researchers, and other professionals.

NSU Strategy 2016-2019

The external 2014 evaluation of NSU (Faugert & Co Utvärdering AB) identified four areas of development. They recommended improving evaluation methods, academic quality, organisational visibility, and the balance of participation across the Nordic and Baltic countries. The Strategic Plan for 2016-2019 met these challenges in the following ways:

Participation:

NSU established networks with young researchers and students and increased participation of civil society practitioners. NSU also increased the geographic range of participants: from across the entire Nordic and Baltic region, including peripheral areas such as Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Sapmi; and a diversity of other nationalities, including Cameroon, the United States, India, Algeria, Russia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France and Taiwan.

Public relations and visibility:

NSU improved the official homepage and standardised organisation social media use. NSU's publication policy was reformulated to focus on publishing in recognized publishing channels. NSU collaborated with many local partners to organise thematically targeted events open to the public, such as open Keynote lectures in the Summer Session. NSU also implemented evaluation methods and standards for self-evaluation of the activities.

Linguistic and cultural plurality:

NSU promoted the use of Nordic and Baltic languages through the production of scholarly publications in multiple languages. NSU also hosted multi-linguistic public events and invited contributions specifically focused on the plurality of languages spoken in Nordic and Baltic region.

Regional focus and local collaboration:

NSU developed collaboration in the Baltic Sea Region (Östersjöområdet) by hosting several symposia in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, St. Petersburg, and Fårö.

NSU Strategy 2020-2023

In 2020-2023, NSU will continue the strategic development across the four key areas highlighted in the 2014 evaluation, while attending to new factors influencing the direction of NSU and the Nordic and Baltic region. Diversifying external funding sources and identifying funding opportunities from the Nordic and Baltic countries, and from elsewhere is a priority. Creating and providing structures for making successful applications is the main aim for this period and developing resilient practices for securing external funding also in the future.

Regional focus and local collaboration includes increasing the balance between participants from the different Nordic and Baltic countries and building on the regional focus work that NSU has already undertaken by turning towards the North Sea as a new geographic priority. During this period NSU will be hosting the summer session events in Norway, Iceland, and Denmark.

Participation is supported by offering targeted scholarships and grants to people from underrepresented areas, including the Arctic region. NSU is also reaching out to institutions in underrepresented regions for potential collaborations and/or research initiatives. NSU is strengthening already existing international networks and continues to encourage the inclusion of young researchers, students, and civil society practitioners by supporting innovative and experimental research and creative practice at an early stage.

Public relations and visibility will be increased through the major public celebration of NSU during the 2020 Summer Session in Norway. Through following the traces of a wide diversity of creative and scholarly projects that explore the history of the institution and the communities that it has generated over time will make the values of NSU visible also to the wider public. A dynamic new website commemorating the 70 year anniversary is following the project Tracing the Spirit of the Nordic Summer University past, present and future. NSU is also aiming to establish enduring collaborations with recognized publishers.

Linguistic and cultural plurality will be supported through promoting Nordic and Baltic languages through the production of scholarly publications in multiple languages. NSU continues to host multi-linguistic public events and is inviting contributions specifically focused on the plurality of languages spoken in Nordic and Baltic region to the study program.

Sustainability is supported by promoting environmentally responsible means of maintaining international networks and supporting local communities in the planning of NSU events. Participants are supported in making environmentally responsible choices about travel and consumption for NSU events.