

Evaluation of SFU applications 2022

1. Context

The Ministry of Education and Research established a programme for 'Centres for Excellence in Higher Education' (*Senter for fremragende utdanning* - SFU) in 2010. A call for applications to establish pilot SFU centres took place in 2011 (which established the ProTed Centre), followed by additional calls in 2013 (establishing bioCEED, CEMPE and MatRIC), 2016 (establishing CCSE, CEFIMA, Engage and ExcITed), and 2018 (establishing CELL, COAST, iEarth and SHE).

Each SFU Centre receives an initial grant for a period of five years with the possibility to renew their status for an additional five years after a mid-term evaluation. The mid-term evaluation is carried out towards the end of their first funding period.

An expert panel was appointed, consisting of professionals with expertise in the field of teaching and education in higher education, research and innovation; education management; and interdisciplinarity. The panel was supplemented by subject specialists across the respective centres' subject areas. The members of the 2022 panel were:

Rolf Hughes, KU Leuven	Panel chair
Martine Jordana Baarholm, student representative appointed by NSO	Panel member
Didi Griffioen, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences	Panel member
Richard Reece, University of Kent	Panel member
Oliver Vettori, Vienna University of Economics and Business	Panel member
Anja Olsen Moberg	Secretariat
Ida Iselin Eriksson	Secretariat
Torstein Nielsen Hole	Secretariat

All (28) incoming proposals were evaluated and individually graded by each panel member prior to a first meeting in June 2022. In addition to individual scores, the panel also gave a RAG-rating of the proposals based on the overall impression of the application, indicating which proposals had finalist quality and which proposals were up for discussion. Red denoted the proposal was not of finalist quality, amber meant undecided, and green indicated the proposal was of finalist quality.

Prior to the meeting the panel members were given the overview of each other's assessment including grades and feedback, a visualised overview of the RAG-rating, average score for each proposal as well as grading variance. The documents were used by the panel in their discussion and consolidation of the final grade.

The panel discussed and graded all proposals, starting with the proposals with lowest average grade and then moving upwards through the scores. The expert panel selected finalists based on the assessment criteria listed in the call for proposals (pp 4-5). Proposals are graded from 1 (poor) to 7 (exceptional). In accordance with the call for proposals “The SFU status is awarded based on quality. If there are multiple applications of equally high quality, the academic range of the SFU portfolio may be given priority” (page 8). This was not relevant for the selection of finalists.

Supplementing the first face-to-face meeting with online meetings, the expert panel selected six proposals as finalists for site visits.

The report which follows summarises the key findings garnered from the preparatory work and site visits to the six short-listed Centres being evaluated.

2. Ways of working

From 28 applications, a shortlist of 6 proposals were selected for a site visit. Site visits extended over two weeks in late August and mid-September and took the panel almost the length and breadth of Norway. A site visit was typically scheduled as follows:

Duration:	Event
08.30 - 09.00	Panel arrival
09.00 – 09.30	General presentation of the centre We invite the centre to give a presentation of their work so far and ambitions of the centre
09.30 – 10.15	Meeting with senior institutional management, centre leaders and key team members We would like to meet managers, <u>leaders</u> and key team members. If the Centre is a consortium, this should be reflected in the composition of participants.
10.15 – 10.45	Private panel meeting
10.45 – 11.45	Meeting with teaching staff and technical and supporting staff if relevant. We would like to meet staff members, some of whom are directly involved in the centre. Teaching staff not directly involved should also be included.
11.45 – 12.45	Private panel meeting including lunch
12.45 – 13.30	Meeting with stakeholders We would like to meet key stakeholders, including alumni.
13.30 – 14.00	Private panel meeting
14.00 – 15.00	Meeting with students We would like to meet students, 3 of the students can be student representatives in the proposed centre.
15.00 – 15.30	Closing remarks We would like to meet with centre leaders and key team members in a final meeting.
15.30	Departure

Practical points:

- The aim of each site visit was to explore issues related to the proposal concerning existing excellence and the proposed vision, in order to better understand how the proposal will work in action.

- The group visiting the institution comprised eight people: five in the expert panel, one subject expert within the field and two administrators from the Directorate for Higher Education and Skills. A list of names was provided prior to the visit.
- All meetings were in person meetings – on this occasion, hybrid meetings were avoided.

From the six short-listed candidates, three candidates were selected for funding.

3. Key findings across the site visits

Factors that are key to the future success of any prospective SFU centre include connected leadership throughout the full range of stakeholders (both external and internal), governance arrangements (including transparency) involving global representation at the top level, diversity both of the student body and their teaching staff, and convincing strategies for quality assurance.

Aside from such factors, the panel identified several general tendencies from the site visits.

Firstly, the quality of the written applications has increased over the duration of the SFU initiative. Sometimes the promise of the written application was not substantiated by the reality of the site visit, and at other times suspected areas of weakness in the written application were confirmed through the site visit, making clear once again the value of the chosen two-step process of evaluation. Only our top-ranked centre was deemed excellent on both levels in all areas.

Secondly, many still struggle with the question of what a SFU centre is (or might be under their stewardship). Sometimes the centre is equated with simply providing an excellent education – this is, of course, important, but a centre needs to be more, in effect it needs to be a *step-change* in education. In this respect, more can and should be learned from existing SFU centres, and potentially the Directorate has a role in facilitating such exchanges of experience. Help and support can also be provided in evaluating what prospective centres seek to achieve, using both hard and soft metrics. Detailed descriptions of quality assurance strategies would have strengthened both the written and site-visit elements of the application process.

Applying for funding on the basis of *existing quality*, while the funding being sought is also intended to *raise quality to a level of excellence* implies a sequencing that spans the past, present and future of educational activities. We witnessed a broad range of interpretations of what a Centre for Excellence might be. For some it represented internal leverage, for others an opportunity to promote an existing Bachelor programme, for others still it had an ambassadorial function for educational methods honed over many years. The discussion might be usefully reformulated from what a centre *needs to be*, to what a centre *needs to do*. Workshop exchanges between existing and prospective SFU centres might enhance understanding of the core features of a Centre for Excellence, as conceived by the SFU programme.

Lastly, it was a source of surprise and some disappointment that so few proposals had endeavoured to benchmark their proposed activities in relation to existing international

initiatives in their chosen educational area. This makes it more difficult for proposals to articulate a convincing case for the centre's potential relevance, originality and significance.

Concluding remarks

The panel were agreed that the strongest applications and best site visits were those in which the students had played a lasting, authentic and integral role throughout the application process. Students are the future of each centre and should be included in the planning from the inception.

Our congratulations to the successful centres – we look forward to seeing your work coming to fruition over the coming years. Our congratulations are also extended to all of the short-listed candidates, and indeed to all who submitted an application, a process that requires a considerable investment of time, expertise and teamwork. Regardless of result, we hope that this has been a valuable learning experience, and one that may help your applications develop ahead of the next call.

On behalf of the 2022 SFU panel, it has been a privilege to read and witness the breadth of existing and projected educational activities in Norwegian universities and beyond. The panel would like to extend its sincere thanks and gratitude to the HK-Dir staff (Anja Olsen Moberg, Ida Iselin Eriksson and Torstein Nielsen Hole) for so skilfully guiding us through the process, and ensuring that we followed good practice at all times in regards the tasks at hand. Their planning and enthusiasm greatly facilitated the occasionally arduous schedule of site visits. I would also like to thank the individual panel members for their insights, professionalism, patience and collegiality throughout the evaluation process.

Yours sincerely,



prof. dr. Rolf Hughes 20 October 2022

Feedback to finalists

Name of Centre:	CIE - Center for Interdisciplinary Education
Name of Institution:	University of Oslo
<p>Aim and vision</p> <p>CIE's vision is to <i>establish a national and international hub for the research-based integration of interdisciplinary competence in higher education</i>. At the starting point of CIE's work is the intended outcome for students, teachers, administration, leadership and stakeholders to <i>develop interdisciplinary competence and to participate in, facilitate and lead interdisciplinary processes</i>.</p> <p>The vision and aims of the centre are translated into four objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop programs, methods, pedagogies and approaches for interdisciplinary education, • To establish a community and culture for interdisciplinary teaching and learning • To disseminate methods and approaches to interdisciplinary education locally, nationally and internationally • To build a research basis for interdisciplinary teaching and learning and measure the impact of activities. 	
<p>Centre Plan and Organisation</p> <p>In line with the four objectives mentioned above, CIE's centre plan envisions four interconnected work packages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WP 1 is dedicated to developing approaches and pedagogies for interdisciplinary education. In order to reach a suitable number of students, learning opportunities are created on three different levels: interdisciplinary programs (and modules), interdisciplinary courses and interdisciplinary sessions. Several clear targets and outcomes are attached to this. • WP 2 is about building a culture for interdisciplinary teaching and learning. Less precise than WP 1, this WP intends to develop ways of motivating and enabling teachers, also with the help of an interdisciplinary facilitator program involving students as learning assistants and student researchers. • WP 3 focuses on dissemination of knowledge and practices, aiming for building a stronger local community, as well as increasing national visibility and international collaboration. Planned activities involve conferences, seminars and courses on various levels, but also the establishment of an honours program within the Circle U university alliance. • WP 4 intends to develop a research-led and research-oriented evaluation and impact framework in order to assess the progress of the centre as well as its impact. Making use of various methods (case studies, rubrics and assessment scales, surveys), the centre also envisions developing a research community which would delve into the various activities and their effectiveness. <p>The CIE Centre is set up as a collaboration between the Faculties of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Oslo (UiO). Students are intended to be key</p>	

partners in all aspects of the centre: in centre leadership, program and course designs, teaching and evaluation.

Strengths and weaknesses

During the assessment of the application and in the course of the site visit, the panel was impressed by a considerable number of strengths and assets, most notably:

- CIE benefits from a leadership team on the institutional level not only in full support of the centre, but heavily invested in it, also with a high level of awareness regarding risks and challenges. This is also mirrored in other key actor groups: There was a general sense of acknowledging the challenges in changing the mindsets not only of students but also of teachers, administrators and leadership across all actors, but also plenty of ideas on how to tackle these challenges.
- CIE is driven by an institution embracing the need to change the key skills and competences graduates need to navigate the complex challenges our societies are facing. The panel found clearly defined plans of how to instill this change and potentially scale the initiative up to a substantial degree, including a smart distinction between session, course and program level within the honors logic.
- The considerable experience UiO has already gathered through various initiatives over previous years is a great basis for further development, which includes the existing honors program as much as available infrastructure (e.g. LINK)
- The panel met dedicated and reflective academic and administrative staff members, who appear intrinsically motivated to allocate time and effort to making interdisciplinary learning and teaching work and showed a keen interest in adding new courses or exploring new themes. In addition to the focus on teaching skills, the university showed considerable awareness that the administrative staff is a key group to involve in the change.
- CIE was also much appreciated by its stakeholders who were emphasizing the potential of the centre and the relevance of being able to think outside of the (disciplinary) box and to collaborate in order to define and solve problems. They were also fully positive about their current relationship with individual academics and/or the institution as a whole. This was mirrored from the perspective of students who were not only enthusiastic about the centre and centre activities but already demonstrating the very openness, reflexivity and interdisciplinary literacy the centre wants to instill.

On the other hand, the panel also identified some key elements still lacking as well as some room for further improvement, most notably:

- The panel would like to see some plans on how the centre is going to avoid creating unintended consequences (e.g. elitism or getting a skewed distribution of disciplinary interest and investment) and how it will navigate potential goal conflicts or even identify them in due time (including a limited focus on those Faculties and disciplines more willing to cooperate).

- Ideas of monitoring success were presented, but it is yet not fully clear how the centre and the institution as a whole will determine its impact on the relevant national and international communities, beyond the question of succeeding in instilling certain competences in students
- The panel did not yet find any discernible relationships with (inter)national institutions specialized in interdisciplinary teaching and learning, encouraging CIE to engage in a systematic exchange with other, potentially more experienced institutions.
- The panel did not find a clear strategy of how the resource issues attached to scaling up will be ultimately resolved, considering that someone needs to decide which courses and topics will actually be tackled, that the teachers currently involved need to invest extra time to make it work, that student facilitators need to be trained and paid and that overhead cost often rise exponentially when scaling up.
- The panel noted a somewhat limited notion of external stakeholders from the centre's point of view, which was in contrast with the university level partnerships. Encouraging and supporting CIE to make effective and systematic use of the university's impressive connections with institutions, partners and communities outside of the university, and bring in external partners as a firm pillar of what the centre does and how it does it, will help the centre to increase its relevance.

Nevertheless, and in the light of strengths and assets listed above, the panel is confident that CIE has a sound basis and a clear enough plan to further develop the already excellent existing initiatives as an SFU, and therefore recommends to fund CIE. In moving forward, the panel also advises CIE to consider the observations on areas of improvement mentioned above and suggests to start with giving further thought to the notion of interdisciplinarity and the question how the pedagogy and didactics linked to interdisciplinary teaching can be extrapolated from the pioneering use cases in order to create a common standard and inform the teaching practices of teachers not directly involved in the centre's work, including on an international level.

Overall recommendation: Fund

Feedback to finalists

Name of Centre:	CreaTeME - Centre for Excellence in Creative use of Technologies in Music Education
Name of Institution:	University of Agder
Aim and vision	<p>The proposed Centre for Excellence in the Creative use of Technologies in Music Education (CreaTeME) is aimed at promoting and developing <i>'innovative, inclusive, responsive and responsible use of technology in artistic education'</i>, and its primary mission is to become the <i>'nexus in Europe for the development of innovative artistic and pedagogical approaches to technology in higher music education'</i>.</p>
Structure and organisation of the centre	<p>CreaTeME is aimed at responding to four major challenges facing higher music education due to digitalisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technology changes the premises for what counts as musical knowledge and creativity; • technology changes the premises for artistic and pedagogical practices for music education; • technology changes the work market; and • technology challenges social and political structures in music education and in society in general. <p>CreaTeME aims to meet these challenges through five work packages (WPs) that develop particular areas of practice. The proposed Centre is based on strong foundations at UiA. In 2013, DPM established the first specialisation in electronic music in Norway, and offered a master's degree in electronic music in 2016. A bachelors programme in electronic music was established in 2020. In addition, DPM hosts the Popular Music Research Unit (PMRU) consisting of five research groups, and currently holds 18 PhD research fellow positions contributing to musicological and artistic research. Three PhD research fellows are explicitly researching pedagogical approaches to technology in higher music education. Nine PhD research fellows have an explicit focus on creative use of technology in music, or technology's impact on the music markets. DPM is the only institution in Norway offering electronic music at Bachelors, Masters and PhD level.</p> <p>The Department of Popular Music (DPM) is established as a driving force for the continuous development of popular music pedagogy. The proposed CreaTeME SFU will be headed by Director (Prof. Jan Bang) and Co-director (Assistant Prof. Hilde Norbakken), leading the centre management group. The Director is an experienced project leader, having organised and arranged the Kristiansand Punkt Festival annually since 2005 which showcases experimental music from all over the world. The Centre management group will oversee the day-to-day management of the Centre and report to the Centre Board, which will hold the governance responsibility, through meetings each semester.</p>

Strengths and weaknesses

Using a combination of both the written application and the site visit, the panel noted the following strengths:

- The application presented a well-structured project plan with a clear timeline and well-defined milestones and deliverables. It was seen that these aligned well with the broader strategy of the university.
- The panel felt that the project team was cohesive and was driven by a shared vision and characterised by high enthusiasm, expertise and mutual appreciation. This includes partners from outside of the university and, most notably, the student partners, who appear to be an integral and active part of the planning and potential of the proposed centre.
- The ambition to scale up and to become more visible on the national and international level was clear, and this was based on a model of co-ownership regarding project partners
- While the electronic music programme was still relatively young, the panel felt that there was a very good foundation to build upon, including past achievements of high reputation, experienced and motivated staff, and visible leadership support and interest in the centre

In addition to the above, the panel would have liked to have seen the following:

- Further plans as to how CreaTeME will utilise its achievements and findings to inspire higher education beyond the field of music education. For example, how might the Centre adapt and promote its student partnership model or specific pedagogical and didactic principles to a wider audience?
- A more detailed plan of what steps will be taken to establish CreaTeME as the stated '*prime nexus in Europe for the development of innovative artistic and pedagogical approaches to technology in higher music education*'. The panel felt that this should go beyond the relatively short-term activities linked in the work packages, and be based on a regular reflection of where the Centre is compared to where it wants to be on a regular cycle.
- In a number of areas, the panel was of the view that there was a lack of success indicators outlined that could be used to show what a successful Centre would look like, and where and how it impacts its relevant environments more clearly. The evaluation of the activities of the Centre – both in terms of student outcomes and more widely in terms of artistic impact – will be vital to show value for money if Centre status is awarded.
- The panel felt that the dissemination plans for the Centre were weak and need to be strengthened. They felt that the systematic gathering of key experiences and insights (research) needed to take place and these need to be shared also across space and time (dissemination), including in the academic domain.

In summary, the panel felt that CreaTeME represented an excellent candidate for the award of SFU Centre status. It is based on strong foundations and has a coherent leadership structure that the panel felt confident were capable of delivering the outlined proposal. Moreover, the strong partnership with students was seen as a considerable advantage. If awarded SFU status, however, the Centre will need to establish rigorous and objective measures to evaluate the outcomes of the initiatives they undertake. Knowing what works – even in an artistic endeavour – is a vital thread to convincing others (students, other music departments, funding agencies, etc.) that the investment in the Centre has been both appropriate and successful. In a similar vein, the Centre should reconsider its dissemination plan to maximise the reach of its outcomes.

Finally, the panel recognised the efforts being made to close the gender gap among students entering the programmes run by DPM. They were, however, somewhat unconvinced that the proposed methods to reduce this further (mainly local visits) would have the desired effect to closing the gap further. The proposed Centre may therefore wish to reconsider how this work may be best achieved.

The panel recognised that CreaTeME was already a leader in this space in Norway and had the potential to be a leader both across Scandinavia and world-wide. By addressing the comments and suggestions above, the panel had confidence that CreateMe could fulfil its ambitions and create a legacy for both students in electronic music at UiA and also in the wider context of Norwegian artistic educational processes and practices.

Overall panel recommendation: Fund

Feedback to finalists

Name of Centre:	SITRAP - Centre for Integrated and Transdisciplinary Education in Planning
Name of Institution:	Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)
<p>Aim and vision</p> <p>The proposed Centre for Excellence in Education for Centre for Integrated and Transdisciplinary Education in Planning (SITRAP) is aimed at creating a national Centre for professional didactics in spatial planning in Norway. The stated objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain a comprehensive didactic knowledge about how the complexity in real life situations can inform and influence teaching and learning; • Contribute to quality in spatial planning study programs that offer a variety of learning methods focused on planning tools and techniques, transdisciplinary co-creation, and integrated problem solving • Inspire students to learn how to learn as a basic skill in complex problem-solving and prepare them to take a leading role in implementing the green shift; • Raise the students' self-confidence in handling unclear and rapidly changing situations due to global and local challenges; and • Ensure that knowledge in spatial planning didactics play a key role in the strategic priorities in the higher education sector and in public planning authorities. 	
<p>Structure and organisation of the centre</p> <p>SITRAP is an established Centre (https://www.nmbu.no/en/faculty/landsam/research/centers/sitrap) formed out of previous applications for SFU status. The Centre looks to raise awareness of the disciplinary and methodological complexity embedded in the practice of spatial planning. It is a response to the need for more planners with transdisciplinary competence to handle societal challenges in a spatial dimension and a forward-oriented temporality. The goal of the Centre is to innovate spatial planning education in Norway and to develop professional didactics covering all study programs that spatial planning recruits from.</p> <p>If funded, SITRAP will organise its activities according to three strategic areas encompassing nine work packages (WP) and two existing projects. The strategic areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing student active learning and involvement in education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WP1: Transdisciplinary Masters project; URBAN Lab (an existing DIKU funded-project); WP2: Seed-funding for supporting student-initiated; WP3: A student driven "Help Desk" for digital project work • Utilizing professional networks better <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SAMBED (an existing DIKU-funded project); WP4: An annual national student contest in "place making", WP6: Carry out action research on learning in the professions • Developing professional didactics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WP5: Design thinking as method activities; WP7: Archive of didactical notes; WP8: piloting an Examen Facultatum in spatial planning.; WP9: Building up an international network <p>In addition, a tenth work package (WP10) will focus on Centre management. A specific Board structure is not outlined in the application but an organisation chart was provided on the day of the site visit.</p>	

Strengths and weaknesses

Using a combination of both the written application and the site visit, the panel noted the following strengths:

- A project team driven by enthusiasm and the willingness to learn and adapt, as indicated by the fact that the Centre plan has developed significantly since first submitted several years, and also since receiving feedback from this panel in this round.
- Lots of teachers, stakeholders and students who are embracing the Centre ideas wholeheartedly, communicating their hopes and ideas for the Centre, many of which, even though yet not a part of the plan, could provide conceptual fuel for a long time to come. Students, in particular, emphasised how they felt involved, and were taken seriously as partners across disciplines and levels of academic seniority.
- A well-balanced governance and management structure for the proposed Centre, which should be able to ensure buy-in of the key actors and stakeholders inside and outside of the leading Faculty. The panel would also like to note that the stakeholders they met are highly appreciative of NMBU and emphasised the needs for changing the way students are taught and trained in the field of (urban) planning.
- A project plan that has reached a visible stage of maturity with clearly defined work package descriptions including input, activities, output and to some degree even the intended outcomes.
- Well established structures, processes and activities on which SITRAP could build upon, provided additional resources help the institution to stabilize and scale up past achievements.

In addition to the above, the panel would have liked to have seen the following:

- How the different work packages – as well described and structured as they may be – will ensure that all the expected outcomes until 2028 can be fully realized; or, put differently, how the Centre’s leading team plans to achieve these goals beyond implementing the activities outlined in the work packages.
- How the Centre will be able to know if it has achieved its expected outcomes and what measures of success will help the Centre’s leadership to navigate the landscape of complex relations and choices, not least with regard to the question which actors and disciplines to include in order to achieve a more holistic education.
- Which international examples function as aspirants for the Centre and which national institutions are its key competitors, also in relation to the ambition of being a leader in the field beyond the argument of uniqueness.
- How the planned dissemination activities will enable SITRAP to legitimately claim its leader and innovator role on the national and international stage, in particular in relation to the difficulties in reaching audiences in a multi-disciplinary, multi-perspective and multi-discourse environment.
- How SITRAP could make even better use of its impressive networks, in other words how to bring the different communities it intends to serve through the Centre activities even more into the activities. This would also help the Centre to avoid limiting its transdisciplinary approach to the disciplines ready at hand.

SITRAP’s development would benefit by identifying similar centres internationally and benchmarking its vision against existing offerings elsewhere in the world. This area should be strengthened to ensure that the lessons learned from the Centre’s activities could be of greater benefit to as wide an audience as possible. In addition, the Centre should establish rigorous and objective measures to evaluate the outcomes of the initiatives they undertake. Knowing what works is a vital thread to convincing others (students, other planning departments, funding agencies, etc.) that the investment in the Centre has

been both appropriate and successful. In a similar vein, the Centre should reconsider its dissemination plan to maximise the reach of its outcomes. It was not always clear why an SFU centre was required for the further advancement of SITRAP beyond what is already being achieved by the Centre itself. The panel appreciated expansion possibilities that additional funding would bring, but a centre should lead to a step-change in student outcomes while providing measurable metrics of its successful outcomes. With the recommendation that these shortcomings be addressed, the panel could see how the existing foundations, student involvement and coherent leadership structure could successfully deliver the outlined proposal.

In summary, the panel felt that SITRAP represented a strong candidate for the award of SFU Centre status. The Centre is based on solid existing foundations and has a coherent leadership structure. The strong partnership with students was seen as a considerable advantage. The panel felt confident that the Centre was capable of delivering the outlined proposal.

Overall panel recommendation: Fund

Feedback to finalists

Name of Centre:	JIMP - Journalism, Innovation, Media Law and Practice
Name of Institution:	Volda University College
<p>Aim and vision</p> <p>The proposed Centre for Excellence in Education in Journalism, Innovation, Media Law and Practice (JIMP) has the stated ambition <i>'to educate journalists that are able to understand, convene and critically assess the developments in the media industry's conditions at large'</i>. The Journalism Programme at Volda University College (VUC) is committed to educating journalists who have a deep, relevant and critical understanding of the different roles the media undertake in society, with the ability to engage in thorough ethical and legal reflections and with the goal of protecting and supporting democratic processes through truthful, balanced journalism. The aim of JIMP is to create the journalist of the future: journalists that are ready for tomorrow's workforce. The students in the Centre will be conscious of being agents in shaping their own education and able to manage emerging ethical, judicial and socio-cultural challenges.</p>	
<p>Structure and organisation of the centre</p> <p>The Faculty of Media and Journalism (FMJ) at VUC offers one of Norway's longest established programmes in media studies. FMJ has a demonstratable leading national position in journalism education in Norway, having <i>'educated many important and influential journalists, editors and media scholars over the last 50 years'</i>. The study programmes at FMJ utilise the Volda model of experiential learning that are founded on the didactic philosophy of experiential learning with all students being afforded opportunities to work in a full-time 'real life' internal editorial setting and also participating in external internships in professional media organisations. Five "agreements of intention" have been established to support this application with the following partners: NRK, VG, Sunnmørsposten, the University of Bergen and the Fonn Group.</p> <p>As a Centre of Excellence for education, JIMP aims to improve journalism education by utilising three work packages (WPs) that develop particular areas of practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WP 1 will seek to mainstream existing excellence in experiential education throughout the entire programme and deepen the quality and relevance of research-based experiential education throughout the editorial workflow through the use of new technology, close mentoring and editorial guidance. This will integrate the use of storytelling and the use and testing of new technology in journalism, and in its associated workflows • WP 2 will focus on media law and ethical and legal questions associated with journalistic processes will be fully implemented in the BA at all levels in relevant subjects and work processes. • WP 3 will be an innovation strand that aims to strengthen innovative aspects of the current journalism programme through active student participation and research. <p>The proposed JIMP SFU centre leadership team will consist of a centre leader (the Vice Dean) and three project leaders (Associate Professors), with administrative support of a coordinator. An Advisory Board for the centre with representatives of partners, students, employees and centre leadership will be appointed and meet annually to evaluate the progress and mission of the centre. Staff from the</p>	

Institute of Journalism will participate with teaching and research on the activities in the centre, and staff and students from other FMJ programmes will participate in parts of the work packages.

Strengths and weaknesses

Using a combination of both the written application and the site visit, the panel noted the following strengths:

- A mission that is driven by a strong belief in the importance of professionally and ethically acting journalists who are equipped for dealing with the grand challenges in our societies as much as with the specific challenges for the journalist and media field
- Dedicated faculty and staff with lots of enthusiasm, who feel their ambitions are hampered by a considerable lack of time and other resources and see the Centre as an opportunity to scale up and stabilize current efforts.
- Students who really love their studies at Volda and who are proudly investing a great deal of their personal time into making use of the impressive infrastructure and equipment in order to become better at what they are doing
- Many interesting pilot activities and initiatives which demonstrate the creativity and motivation of teachers and students alike, many of which well deserving to be properly evaluated and researched and further developed.

In addition to the above, the panel would have liked to have seen the following:

- A clear idea of why a Centre, or Centre status, would be the primary route to achieving the various goals, and also what the Centre could be and become beyond a hub injecting much needed resources into the university.
- Detailed plans and targets that function as a roadmap towards what the Centre will have achieved 3, 5 or 10 years from now, including a sense of the quantitative and qualitative dimension of upscaling and how the Centre could in due time become an innovation hub instead of catching up with developments in the professional field
- Which measures of success and impact indicators would help the Centre to understand if it is successful and where it should go, including clear considerations of how the field and education in general would benefit from the Centre's activities, at the national as well as at the international level
- Clear and systematic plans for student involvement and how student would become fully-fledged partners and beneficiaries of the Centre's activities

In summary, the panel felt that JIMP represented a strong candidate for the award of SFU Centre status that is based on an already excellent existing journalism programme. The panel recognised the importance of the experiential learning offered to students at VUC and the benefits of this, both in terms of student feedback and employment opportunities available to them both during and after graduation, were evident. The application for SFU Centre status is based on strong foundations, and the outlined proposal is of significant relevance to journalism both within the Norwegian context and elsewhere. The strong partnership with students was seen as a considerable advantage.

Throughout the site visit, the panel questioned why an SFU centre was required for the further advancement of journalism education beyond what could be funded by the institution itself. It was clear that the Department was both housed in excellent accommodation and appeared to currently have all of the equipment necessary to provide journalism students with an excellent education. The panel appreciated the notion of being able to do 'more of the same', but were not necessarily

convinced that this would lead to a step-change in either student outcomes or other measurable metrics of a successful centre. Moreover, the panel felt that the plans to disseminate the findings obtained with either other journalism/media schools in Norway or internationally were comparatively weak. These would definitely need to be strengthened to ensure that the lessons learned from the centre could be of greater benefit to as wide an audience as possible.

If established, the Centre will need to instigate rigorous and objective measures to evaluate the outcomes of the initiatives they undertake. Knowing what works will need to be a vital thread to convincing others (students, other journalism schools, funding agencies, etc.) that the investment in the Centre is both appropriate and successful. A greater level of international benchmarking might assist the Centre to place its ambitions at an appropriate level.

Overall panel recommendation: Do not fund

Feedback to finalist

Name of Centre:	Listen! Centre for Excellent Jazz Education
Name of Institution:	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
<p>Aim and vision</p> <p>The stated vision of the centre is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To transform the culture for music learning and teaching towards a general appreciation of aural learning and teaching • To contribute to rehumanizing the pedagogy and epistemology of higher education and education in general <p>The application emphasizes that the existing Jazz Programme (JP) is the point of departure for the centre. Central to the JP is that key concepts (communicative musicality, imitation, embodied understanding, creative participatory sense-making, community of aural practice, reflection in communicative action, assessment and evaluation of open-ended creative processes) are investigated practically and theoretically, with aural practice being prime. A great deal of experience has accrued to this approach and there is clearly great enthusiasm among teachers and students alike, as the site visit confirmed.</p> <p>The key expressed aim of the centre is to use the anticipated resources to capacity build. Centre funding will allow the group to strengthen its existing network as well as further develop its important outreach work.</p>	
<p>Structure and organisation of the centre</p> <p>The centre will be led by a Management Team consisting of a Director (Njål Ølnes), Deputy Director (Eldbjørg Raknes), Academic Programme Director of JP (Eirik Hegdal), an Administrator (TBA), an Educational Development and Evaluation Manager (Dagrun Engen), and a Research and Partner Manager (Mattias Solli). A partner network is established with all partners based in mid-Norway.</p> <p>The centre is structured around six work packages:</p> <p>WP1 Developing communicative musicality and aural community of practice WP2 Co-creating working life diversity WP3 Early start and broad recruitment WP4 Assessment, evaluation and quality enhancement WP5 Researching creative participatory sense-making WP6 Communicative dissemination</p> <p>Students are involved in all activities and have responsibility for WP-specific projects, including student–student learning activities, organization of festivals and workshops, and evaluations.</p> <p>The centre Management Team is supported by a Steering Committee, Partner Committee, Student Committee and Advisory Board. The centre organisation and proposed structure was clearly articulated in the application, resulting in the decision of the panel to shortlist the application and attend a site visit.</p>	
Strengths and weaknesses	

Using a combination of both the written application and the site visit, the panel noted the following strengths:

- The enthusiasm and commitment of existing students was evident, and the panel interpreted these as being a clear strength. There was evident passion regarding AIM among all groups and a strong belief that funding LISTEN! will represent a major step towards spreading the methodology across the country, even to other countries, and perhaps not just limited to jazz music education. The students were highly supportive of the teaching methods employed on the JP and were able to clearly articulate the perceived advantages of AIM as a method.
- The stakeholders were clear and articulate about the need for a Centre and the value of promoting the AIM listening method (while recognising that the method also needs to be challenged)
- The panel detected a pedagogical philosophy that could be developed beyond the AIM approach. This translates to two very ambitious vision statements and a comprehensive mission. There were many stories of success, which are testament to how AIM works in practice and has been changing how people are experiencing, and learning to appreciate, music.
- Evident also is an impressive array of ideas of how and where AIM and the work of LISTEN! could make a difference for a variety of stakeholders, but most importantly even for people not yet aware of its potential. There is an opportunity here to use the method to reach those not currently perceiving themselves as part of NTNU's musical education.

In addition to the above, the panel would have liked to have seen the following:

- It was unclear what the centre would be beyond a network of partners working to demonstrate and develop the potential of the aural approach
- The transformative nature of AIM is unclear beyond being an effective pedagogic tool
- The applicants could not convincingly describe the place of the proposed centre in relation to existing offerings identified through international benchmarking, despite this being recommended in previous feedback from the panel
- Evidence for the suggested work was not provided, and the panel remained unconvinced that the proposed centre had identified appropriate criteria for success measures
- The panel did not hear persuasive answers to several of the questions proposed to the various interviewees (with the exception of the students and the stakeholders)
- The panel missed clearly outlined plans on how the different subgoals will be systematically implemented, and how some of the activities listed will contribute to achieving these goals
- The proposal failed to articulate what communicable and observable outcomes of the centre's work will help the centre and others to assess LISTEN's success and impact from short-, mid-, and long term perspectives
- The proposal also lacked research-based reflection of the limits of the AIM approach, what will be needed to systematically develop and adapt it for other contexts, or how to overcome the challenge of cognitively convincing people of a clearly experientially oriented approach
- In regards a question concerning the evaluation of students, the panel was informed that evaluation is not appropriate and so the teachers "fake it" in order "to avoid structures that are hampering the individuals." This was felt by the panel to be a serious abdication of the responsibility to create appropriate metrics for evaluation and assigning value in an artistic education.

Overall recommendation: do not fund

Feedback to finalist

Name of Centre	PREPARED - Center of Excellence in Crisis Management Education
Name of Institution(s)	Nord University (host), The Arctic University of Norway (UiT), University of South-Eastern Norway (USN), and the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (INN) as consortium partners
Aim and vision	<p>PREPARED's vision is to <i>"be an innovator in crisis management education based on advanced simulation tools and educational platforms integrating scholars, lecturers, researchers, and practitioners in education at all bachelor and master levels."</i> The mission is stated as providing <i>"superior crisis management education on a joint pedagogical platform emphasizing collaborative education and practice-oriented simulation tools, based on the theoretical frameworks of experiential, problem-oriented, and student-centered learning, tailor-made to professional needs."</i></p> <p>In its vision, the centre's vision recognises the inter-disciplinary nature of crisis management and seeks to bring together four academic institutions willing to explore opportunities and synergies that might arise from developing a unified centre of excellence within Norway, whilst also helping to address Norway's somewhat fragmented educational architecture.</p>
Centre Plan and Organisation	<p>PREPARED's centre plan envisions work packages (focus areas) along four major objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a wide-ranging crisis management education curriculum that can be incorporated into higher education and transferred to both national and international learning contexts • To provide competence, capacity, and facilities to conduct innovative, flexible and tailor-made exercises based on computer-aided training technology • To build a collaborative system that empowers students to become resources and active participants in educational programs • To develop a feedback system and evaluation framework for life-long crisis management competence development and strengthen the education-work connectivity <p>These objectives are operationalised in the way of sub-goals (called activities) with a strong developmental orientation, but not yet fully developed targets, milestones or measures of success.</p> <p>In terms of organising the centre, the four focus areas, each a lead and coordinator of its own, are supervised by an Executive Board, including the centre leader (Prof. Borch), the centre coordinator, and the leaders and coordinators of the four focus areas, as well as a Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from the leadership at Nord, USN, INN, UiT, and student representatives. Student involvement in the centre's governance is further ensured by student representatives working closely together with the focus area leads as well as being a part of the Innovation Forum, which also involves employees involved in the centre, representatives from the preparedness and response community, as well as international experts and other SFUs representatives.</p>

PREPARED particularly emphasises its various international partners and networks, such as the Center for Advanced Disaster Emergency and Rapid Response Simulation at York University in Canada, the Risk and Crisis Center at Mid Sweden University, the University of Arctic, the Cooperation Network for Risk, Safety & Security Studies (CONRIS), and the Global Alliance of Disaster Research Institutes (GADRI),

Strengths and weaknesses

During the assessment of the application and in the course of the site visit, the panel was impressed by a considerable number of strengths and assets, most notably:

- The consortium boasts a strong base of existing education, training, and research activity in crisis management, including an emerging portfolio of VR/AR simulation exercises and opportunities for private sector collaboration, public sector participation and academic sector research and education benefits.
- The consortium is also characterised by shared understanding among all key actors and stakeholders that collaborating across the four HEIs on enhancing societal preparedness for disasters would on the one hand benefit all institutions, but also the field as such. Each university has their own specialisations/strengths related to the overall topic. The application's strength clearly emanates from the impressive individual strengths of the consortium partners, including the associated partners and their willingness to learn from each other.
- Efforts are driven by a convincing needs and gap analysis, emphasising how the crisis and disaster management in Norway as a whole would be in need of more coordinated efforts between different institutions, including the government, the key military, key civil institutions dealing with crises and disasters, and last but not least, higher education.
- The centre plan is characterised by clear aims to link four universities with vocational and professional practice colleges for mutual benefit ('better together'), to bring 'traditional' students together with experienced crisis management practitioners seeking to return to academia (lifelong learning within Norway), and to innovate pedagogic strategies and skills in the dissemination of crisis management learning and research
- Last but not least, the panel noted during the visit that a considerable number of smaller initiatives and steps have already been taken (e.g. work on a new standard textbook for the field, collaboration on the level of individual courses). The panel could already see how some seeds from the past were already coming to fruition and how the partners have come to realise and appreciate what others bring to the table and how this opens up new possibilities.

On the other hand, the panel also identified some key elements still lacking as well as some room for further improvement, most notably:

- The panel missed a clearer sense of purpose beyond improved collaborations on crisis and disaster management. In other words: a sense of what the centre could be, also in relation to other international institutions, against which PREPARED wants to benchmark itself. The need for a lead role helping to coordinate crisis and disaster management and find a unified approach was strongly voiced by all actors, especially the associate partners and stakeholders; but it did not become clear how and why this needs to be tackled via a SFU. In this regard, the panel also missed a focus on the more strategic dimension of crisis and disaster management, including aligning the centre itself with national strategies and agencies/authorities in order to

support the desired positioning to become the “go to place for the government” when it comes to crises and disasters.

- The panel also saw the need for a more united approach from senior institutional managers and key actors representing each of the four academic institutions. Whilst supporting the concept of ‘stronger together’, leaders appear to currently oppose any attempt to share academic UG/PG or PhD accreditation for specific offerings. In contrast, the teachers, students, and professional practice stakeholder sessions indicated that this would be their preferred goal.
- In line with this, PREPARED is yet in need of a clear plan what the centre will/can safely achieve in 2, 3 5 or even ten years and what would be needed to get there beyond money and mutual inspiration. Focus area 1 (curriculum development) is a good example here, as the site visit showed that the actual outcome (number of shared courses, PREPARED modules to be incorporated into the various institutions’ programmes) is not yet defined but will depend on what the consortium learns during the project.
- During the site visit, the panel found that a systematic mapping and assessment of what each PREPARED partner will bring that is unique and ground-breaking to the project is yet to be undertaken. Such a step was identified as an early ‘to do’ in the event of funding, as opposed to a compelling assessment of what a ‘better together’ strategy might look like.
- Last but not least, the panel did not hear any explicit proposal of how the centre would help to facilitate second order learning and out of the box thinking among students, which was a clearly stated ambition in the application and the interviews. The consortium partners certainly do not lack pedagogical drive, but questions on how to translate this into practice remained largely unanswered. It might be helpful to explore some yet untried paths in the way knowledge is created and imparted, in order to bring the idea of a pedagogy of the unforeseeable to full fruition.

In summary, the visit confirmed several key strengths of the application and the panel found a consortium eager to tackle the various gaps and needs they had identified when preparing for the application. There are considerable strengths and assets to build upon, and some first successes from an increased collaboration can already be identified. On the other hand, the panel also found considerable gaps and questions not yet tackled, as well as a need to further clarify and specify the centre’s rationale, trajectory and specific outcomes, not least in light of the area emphasised in the SFU call. In other words: the consortium and centre plan will well benefit from some additional time and from taking the current collaborative efforts even further. Applied scenario thinking could probably help all actors involved to get a better understanding of the low hanging fruit as well as the more visionary goals and what steps need to be taken to harvest/achieve them. The panel would also recommend developing a more systematic and sustainable approach to connecting research, education and practice/the professional field, and to invest in leadership mechanisms that will assist the consortium in overcoming silo thinking and fragmentation and achieve convergence beyond individual academics’ interests and concerns.

In conclusion, the panel recommends not to fund PREPARED as an SFU.