



## The Ministry of Education and Research's Quality of Education Prize

The Reference Centre achieved third place (NOK 200,000) in the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research's annual Quality of Education Prize in 2003 for its work to quality-control research-based teaching within laboratory animal science.

The prize was presented at the NOKUT conference in Tromsø in May. Secretary of State Bjørn Haugland described the work of the Centre as follows (our unofficial translation):

*"The project consists of several elements. First, the Centre has developed a course in Laboratory Animal Science. In addition, it has developed a range of Internet services, including general information on Laboratory Animal Science and the mandatory requirements for training in this field for all those who use animals in research. Furthermore, it has produced two databases. The first one, NORINA (A Norwegian Inventory of Audiovisuals, contains information on audiovisual aids and other alternatives to the use of animals in teaching. The other, TextBase contains information on literature within Laboratory Animal Science. Both databases are in English and are available free of charge on the Internet. In connection with this work the Centre has established cooperation with Macquarie University i Australia.*

*As part of their quality control, the Centre applied for and achieved accreditation status from AAALAC International (Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care and Use), an organisation that places emphasis on animal protection and welfare.*

*The jury placed particular emphasis on the projects innovative approach, using new and existing media to adapt to the demands of national legislation. The Centre's breadth of work, providing information both to the scientific community and the general public, is emphasised. The Centre's international focus has contributed to the spread of information far beyond our country's borders."*

### ***Welcome to NOKUT***

*Here you will find information on recognition of foreign higher education, on evaluation and accreditation of Norwegian qualifications and a general overview of higher education in Norway.*

The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, NOKUT, was established by the Storting in 2002 and commenced its activities on 1 January 2003. NOKUT is an independent government body. Through evaluation, accreditation and recognition of quality systems, institutions and course provisions, the purpose of NOKUT is to supervise and help to develop the quality of higher education in Norway. In addition, we consider individual applications for general recognition of foreign qualifications. As the Norwegian ENIC-NARIC center we are also responsible for providing foreign institutions and partners with information on the Norwegian educational system and the system for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications.

### ***Aims and Tasks***

The purpose of NOKUT is to oversee the quality of Norwegian higher education by means of evaluation, accreditation and approval of quality systems, institutions and course programmes. These tasks should be performed in such a way that the institutions can use the results to develop their own quality system. NOKUT also has the role of checking the quality of foreign education and informing about latest developments. Applications from individuals for general recognition of their foreign higher education qualifications are processed by NOKUT.

All evaluation, accreditation and recognition done by NOKUT is open to public scrutiny. NOKUT is responsible for seeing that the results of its work are made known within the field of higher education and in society at large.

### ***NOKUT's tasks are as follows:***

1. Evaluation of quality systems set up by institutions according to the requirements of the Ministry of Education in its regulations and supplementary criteria stipulated by NOKUT itself.
2. Accreditation of institutions such as accredited state university colleges, specialized university colleges and universities.
3. Accreditations to be based on standards decided by the Ministry of Education in its regulations and supplementary criteria stipulated by NOKUT. Accreditation of course programmes at accredited institutions, which these institutions cannot carry out themselves, is to be done by NOKUT according to standards and criteria set out in NOKUT's regulations.
4. Recognition of examinations and degrees under the Act governing private university colleges.
5. Revision of earlier accreditations.
6. Evaluations to assess quality in higher education through the initiative of NOKUT itself or by order of the Ministry.
7. General recognition of foreign education and of education offered by Norwegian institutions which are not governed by the Act relating to universities and university colleges, and the Act relating to private university colleges. NOKUT also has a mandate to ensure that Norwegian interests and obligations arising out of international agreements on recognition and information about higher education are followed up.
8. NOKUT represents Norway in the ENIC-NARIC network and is the information agency described in the Lisbon Convention on Recognition.