

To: Elective courses Working Group/ Kristin Steen Slåttå, secretary

Date: 29.11.2017

Subject: NCHR's position on the report of the Faculty Working Group on Elective Courses (Working Group or WGEC)

The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) congratulates the Working Group for its thorough work and resulting reports concerning the present and the future of elective courses at the Law Faculty.

While taking into consideration that a reduction of the number of elective courses might have a positive effect in increasing the quality of education at the Law Faculty, suggesting a fixed number of *50 elective courses* as a ceiling seems arbitrary. It might be better to determine this number through the process of evaluation of elective courses, which, as indicated in the report, will take place in the course of 2018. Also, a fixed ceiling would make it quite hard for new staff of the Law Faculty to develop new courses based on their own research interests. The opportunity for our academic staff to develop their own courses is crucial as it allows for an interaction between research and teaching which both yields higher quality courses, and makes the positions at the Law Faculty more attractive for future applicants (and present Faculty members).

Many international students are attracted to our Master and exchange programs by the wide variety of elective courses offered by our Law Faculty. The NCHR supports the proposal of the WGEC that the elective courses which are part of the Faculty's four English-taught Master programs would need to be prioritized. They contribute to the international standing of the Law Faculty, the internationalization of education, and the improvement of legal skills and broad multi-disciplinary knowledge of both Norwegian law students and incoming international students.

The NCHR offers the MPhil program on the Theory and Practice of Human Rights. This needs to be taken into account, if the number of elective courses will be determined on an institutional basis. Also, NCHR notes the multi-disciplinary nature of its academic staff and the new emerging areas of



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law and social sciences, as necessitating some flexibility in terms of revising existing elective courses or setting up new elective courses.

The NCHR highlights the good experience of cooperation among teaching/academic staff from different Faculty institutions in the framework of specific courses, including some human rights-related elective courses offered by the Centre. This inter-institutional cooperation should be encouraged.

Finally, the NCHR also supports the report's emphasis on the commitment of course leaders to the elective courses expressed in teaching classes and grading exams, as a precondition for continuing the elective courses in the next period.

Sincerely yours,

Inga Bostad, director

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