

Marketing Education in Norway

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Market Overview

With the combination of a generous funding system for studying abroad and a high share of students going abroad, Norway represents a significant market potential for Canadian universities. The Norwegian government has an unequalled funding system in place for students abroad, and funds more than 26,000 students per year.

The number of Norwegians seeking all or part of their education abroad is on the rise and predicted to increase in the coming years due to larger age cohorts coming through the system, as well as increased efforts on the part of the Government of Norway to send more students abroad.

The Government of Norway has decided to extend its strategy for academic mobility for North America until 2015, with an increased focus on Canada. During the past academic year 2012/2013 there were 405 Norwegians studying in Canada, an impressive increase of 12.5% compared to the 2011/2012 school year. It is the goal of the Norwegian government to increase this to 650 by 2015.

A generous government program granting university students at both the graduate and undergraduate level up to approximately CAN\$50,000 to study abroad per year is one of the main reasons many Norwegian students take all or part of their post-secondary education abroad.

In 2011/2012, statistics show that there was a record number of Norwegians studying abroad: 26,557 in total, representing an increase of 7% from the year before. Of these, 16,368 were pursuing a full degree program and the remaining 10,189 were either visiting students or were participating in exchange programs. English-speaking countries remain the favoured destination for Norwegian students (45% market share). Amongst the English-speaking countries, the UK and the USA are the most popular destinations, followed by Australia. Canada lags somewhat behind with a market share which is lower than Canada's market share of foreign students internationally. The gap between Canada and the other English-speaking countries has decreased. While Australia, UK, and the USA have had declining figures (from 2002-2007), Canada has enjoyed a small, but steady increase.

Education System

Norway conforms to the guidelines from the *Bologna Process* in European higher education. The degree system based on the Bachelor, Master and Ph.D. structure (3+2+3 year structure) has been successfully implemented, together with the ECTS credits system.

Prior to post-secondary education, the Norwegian education system is comprised of 10 years of primary and upper primary school (starting at age 6), followed by 3 years of secondary school.

Student Pool

Canadian education institutions can draw from the university- and university college-level student pool. Students of interest will be those who are looking to do their entire undergraduate or graduate degree in Canada, followed by those who are interested in studying in Canada for one year as a paying visiting student. Student exchanges are also encouraged by the Norwegian government.

Exchange student numbers have grown rapidly. Norwegian universities and university colleges have created many exchange agreements with foreign institutions. Many exchange students tend to want to return to the country where they studied as a Bachelor's student to do their Master's.

In Norway, women between the ages of 20-24 are most likely to go abroad. Amongst the 26,557 Norwegians who studied abroad in 2011/2012, 62% were women and 38% were men. Students from the three counties of Oslo, Akershus and Østfold represent the highest number of students going abroad.

Support from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund

The State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) was established in 1947 to provide financial support for students in the form of loans and grants as part of the policy for equal opportunities to higher education, regardless of social, economic and geographical background. The objective of the policy was also to ensure that the work environment for students abroad is satisfactory so that they can study effectively. Available support for Norwegian students per year can add up to approximately CAN\$50,000.

In addition a **language grant** is offered. Students who are enrolled at non-English speaking institutions may be eligible for a language grant. Language courses must last at least three months with a minimum of 15 hours per week and must be completed before the student starts the degree program.

More information on the Loan Fund can be found at:

<http://www.lanekassen.no/nb-NO/Toppmeny/Languages/Norwegian-students-abroad/>

Secondary Education and Language Schools

As for secondary education, those who travel abroad usually organise their school year abroad with the help of a government-approved exchange program. By using the approved exchange programs the students will receive a small scholarship. Specific rules apply. If one chooses another path, parents will have to pay. This is something they are reluctant to do as education on that level is free in Norway.

Schools interested in promoting ESL/FSL courses may find that attracting students in Norway will be difficult. Most Norwegians travel to Britain or France which are much closer, and also cheaper. Furthermore, English proficiency in Norway is extremely high, so there is little interest in beginner- or intermediate-level programs.

Marketing Opportunities: Fairs and School Visits

Each year, a total of 12 education fairs are organised in different cities in Norway. The fair in Lillestrøm, outside of Oslo, is by far the largest – it is the largest of its kind in Norway, and ranks as one of the most important in Europe. The 2013 fair attracted close to 20,000 young Norwegians looking for education opportunities. Pupils and students are often accompanied by their counsellors and teachers.

Visits to Norway and outreach to schools may also result in greater contacts and cooperation. Many foreign universities arrange visits with a few selected schools which results in a stronger and knowledgeable relationship between the school and the international recruiter.

The Embassy would be happy to discuss and support activities planned for Norway.

Embassy events in 2013-2014

- **Education and Career Fair in Lillestrøm (Oslo), January 6-8, 2014**
- **Activities promoting programs in areas of particular relevance to Canada and Norway (technology, oil and energy, and the Arctic)**
- **Information sessions in cooperation with the Association of Norwegian Students Abroad (ANSA) on higher education in Canada**