

NTNU 2035

Department of Sociology
and Political Science



Strategy 2026–2035

The department strategy for the period 2026-2035 supplements the strategy of the university (NTNU 2035) and the faculty (People Shape Society - Strategy for the Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences 2026-2035).

It shows how the Department of Sociology and Political Science (ISS) offers a significant social scientific voice, ensuring that NTNU fulfills its role as a comprehensive university.

Building upon a long and strong tradition of conducting high quality research, education and outreach, our strategy towards 2035 shows the way for further development, including the longstanding practice of seeking interdisciplinary collaboration to identify and tackle key social challenges.



Photo: Elin Iversen / NTNU

AMBITIONS

Strategy for the Department of Sociology and Political Science 2026–2035

Excellence in research at a high international level, that promotes knowledge for a better society

We are dedicated to further develop our position as an internationally excellent research environment in sociology, political science, sports science, and the related media and communication sciences. We foster development of theory, methodology, and empirically grounded research that is free and independent.

We strive for producing cutting-edge social science, both independently as researchers and in research groups, which are open and dynamic. We foster strong research collaborations — disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary — and ensure that our researchers can participate actively in academic debate and exchange, locally, nationally, and internationally. We attract highly qualified researchers, facilitate excellent research training, and are preferred partners for leading international research projects.

We contribute to academic development and knowledge on community, democracy, just transitions as well as security, safety and civil preparedness through our strategic research areas: 1) technology, digitalization and social change, 2) welfare and inequality, 3) organizations and work, 4) governance, public policy and administration, 5) regional social development and mobility, 6) energy, environment and sustainable development 7) sports and physical activity, 8) political behavior and political communication, 9) international conflict, cooperation and use of power, 10) comparative politics, political systems and development patterns, and 11) political economy.

Through excellence in research-based teaching, ISS is leading the way in developing students' critical understanding of society

We consider teaching and research as inseparable. Grounded in academic freedom – we equip our students with pivotal knowledge, reflexivity, and independent critical-thinking skills, so that they become empowered, independent thinkers equipped to navigate complex challenges in society. Our integrated approach – rooted in state-of-the-art research, societal relevance and ISS' research profile, makes our courses and study programs distinctive.

Based on a strong standing in sociology, political science and sports science, we ensure the sustained high quality of our courses and continuously advance our disciplinary and interdisciplinary study programs as well as further education programs and research training. Teaching is a joint effort, and we collaborate within and across disciplines, and seek work-life relevant partnerships with industry, public-sector, and civil-society actors.

Our academic staff is highly knowledgeable, enriched by international collaborations and perspectives, and continually develops its teaching and supervision expertise. We support international mobility and value an inclusive academic community that acknowledge cultural and linguistic diversity.

Dedication to dissemination, outreach, and relevance

We produce and share knowledge about political, organizational, and social processes providing citizens, decision-makers, and future scientists with the means for critical reflection, rigorous analysis, and positive change and innovation in the public and private sectors.

Within NTNU's main profile in science and technology, ISS plays a pivotal role in providing critical and constructive reflections of technology, organizations, and broader institutional orders. Thereby illuminating implications for democracy, power, and inequality.

ISS' employees are renowned public intellectuals with critical, informed and distinct voices in public debate. We will continue to disseminate our research insights through scholarly venues, teaching, media, industry collaborations, and actively participate in the public debate locally, nationally, and internationally. We ensure that our research is openly available to the public. Our study programs equip our graduates with the skills they need to become key contributors to social progress – locally, nationally, and internationally.



Photo: Espen Bye / NTNU

PREREQUISITES

High standards of research and teaching are protected

Academic freedom is protected– including strong scholarly agency to conduct research as deemed relevant and scholarly autonomy from internal and external pressures. A high degree of organizational autonomy of the department is an important element of our academic freedom.

We monitor teaching effectiveness, conducting continuous course and program evaluations by students and staff, which provide the basis for the further advancement of our teaching. Research time is protected against increasing teaching obligations.

We follow the ethical principles and quality criteria issued by the national and international academic associations in our fields, including standards for scholarly publication, research based teaching and open science.

Willingness to collaborate

We foster collaborations that connect sociology, political-, sports- and media science within and across study programs, research groups and projects. Our social-scientific perspectives inform– and are informed by–diverse perspectives within the university. In the same vein we constantly strive to actively contribute our social science expertise to the broader academic initiatives at NTNU, including the university's strategic research areas.

Beyond NTNU, we cultivate collaborations at local, regional, national, Nordic, European, and global levels. We cherish collaborations with other sectors such as industries, politics, sports, civil society, media, arts, and the public sector.

Employees and students are enabled to participate in and further develop national and international collaboration, by supporting active participation in national and international networks, meetings, and events.

Reliable framework conditions and a professional infrastructure

Our work is built on a professional, efficient, and enabling internal organization. We ensure reliable, yet flexible framework conditions through the effective development and allocation of resources. Our working spaces and equipment are tailored towards individual working needs and effective collaboration

Our administration is an equal partner, and is characterized by a clear distribution of responsibilities, providing professional, user-oriented, and collaborative support to staff, students, and leadership. Closely integrated with our core tasks, the administration and management enables smooth and transparent processes.

We maintain a responsible and collegial management that facilitates active participation, collaboration, and bottom up processes ensuring a good working environment across disciplines and study programs.

High quality working and study culture

Our working and study culture builds on respect, freedom of speech, mutual support, and psychological safety. We value open dialogue, collegiality, and encouraging free, forthright, and respectful expression.

All employees and students contribute to secure good work and study culture. Through effective communication and continuous interaction we keep improving our work environment and recognize achievements that strengthen our community.

Employees and students are invited to help shape the department's activities and future direction. Students are active participants in their education and part of an academic community that promotes cooperation and a strong sense of belonging.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The department provides a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for everyone, regardless of gender, age, ability, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnic background. We align with NTNU's strategy, personnel policy, and national legislation on equality and diversity, drawing on the Norwegian model of democracy, participation, and trust in working life.

Our recruitment, admission, and promotion processes are fair, transparent, and bias-aware. We work for broad representation and universally designed physical, digital, and social learning and working environments.

In research, teaching, and dissemination, we value academic pluralism, respectful dialogue, and diverse perspectives. Our goal is a workplace and learning community where everyone has equal opportunities to contribute and develop. In this way, we strengthen creativity, academic quality, and societal relevance.



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