

ANNUAL REPORT

NORWAY

2010

The three Norwegian military academies (army, air force, navy) have introduced a three-year course offering a bachelor degree in military studies and leadership. The first graduation took place in 2008. Within each of the three academies there are branch specific courses. What follows below is mainly built on the army version of the new course.

The course is based on modules and is a combination of practical skills and academic subjects. English is taught all through the course (240 periods in all at the army academy). The combination of subjects is meant to train and educate officers for commissions in the three services respectively. The main focus is on leadership which in different ways has bearing on all other subjects, both in the ways in which they are taught and in the choice of texts.

With a growing international commitment intercultural communication or cultural awareness has been introduced as part of a peace support operation module (one semester). This module is partly taught in English and will be in English from next year. This offers an opportunity for foreign speakers of English to participate. So far we have had external students from local colleges and universities who have found our module interesting and useful in their future careers.

Testing STANAG 6001

About 300 military and civilian personnel are tested yearly. We prioritise personnel to NATO staffs. Since many positions in Norway also require level 3 across the board there has been an increase in domestically based personnel asking for the test.

Norway uses a multi-level test originally developed for the NATO testing centre at SHAPE. This test has been updated and improved over the years, which has been a formidable task since our testers also will have to do the item writing on top of being full time English teachers. From 2010 the responsibility for testing lies with the Defence Forces University College. The practice of using English teachers from the academies as testers will continue. The new thing is that by 2011 a position for a coordinator of all STANAG 6001 testing will be opened. This person will then administer English testing, updating test batteries, train testers and cooperate internationally etc. This person will also be the Norwegian representative to BILC conferences and seminars and function as head of delegation.

We are happy to announce that cooperation with Sweden has been very useful in creating new tests and ideas of how to further develop the test batteries. This bilateral project will hopefully be carried on in the future and talks are taking place to look into how this can best be done.

We are at a crossroads because the increasing demand for testing cannot be left to the English teachers at the academies unless they are being trained as certified testers and that testing becomes part of their job descriptions. Thus we have started work-shops to train new testers and expect to continue this process until we can certify enough testers which we expect to do by the end of year 2011. There still remain a lot of problems to be solved.

The Defence Forces School of Intelligence and Security

The following languages are offered in 2-year courses: Dari, Pashto, Russian and Arabic. 60 weeks are devoted to language training the rest of the time to culture, intercultural awareness, politics, history and literature. The course gives 100 credits for candidates who want to proceed to a bachelor study at the University of Oslo which requires 180 credits.

There are two teachers for each language; one of them is a native speaker of the target language. The final tests for the students are an achievement test and a proficiency test. The level descriptors of STANAG 6001 are used and more than half of the students achieve 2, and a few 3. The tests are made by the local teachers based on STANAG 6001 and adapted from the students' mother tongue to the target language.

The selection of students is based on a language aptitude test developed locally. In addition the students must meet the demands for officer candidate training. Upon graduation the students face a 2-year duty service as linguists and sergeants. There is a problem keeping the students in service once their obligatory service is over. This is a challenge and now an advanced course is offered the second year of service, hopefully this will contribute to keeping the personnel longer in the military.