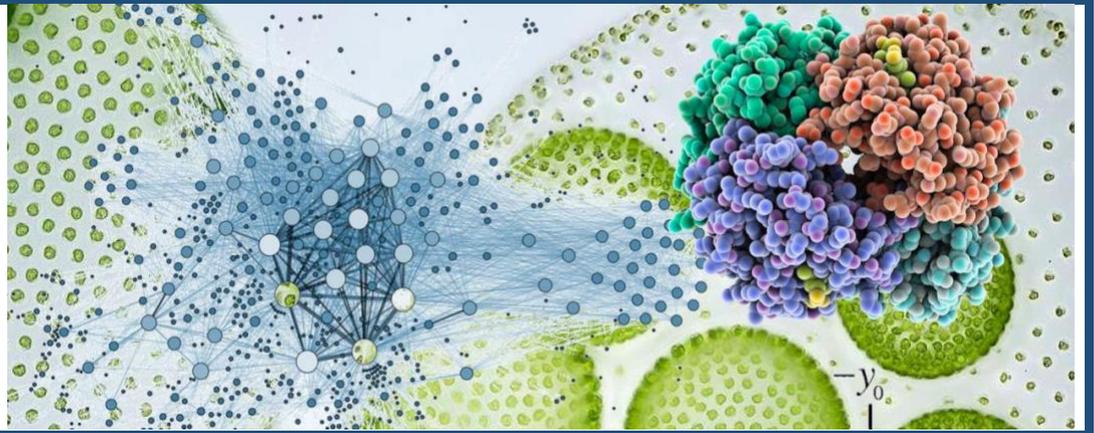


NEWSLETTER

Department of
Informatics



No. 8/2020
24th April 2020



Editor-in-chief: Pinar Heggernes. Editor: Linda Vagtskjold. Contributions or comments to the newsletter are very welcome.

Dear colleagues,

It is the most exciting time of the year: the application numbers for higher education in Norway are out! I am delighted to announce that we see an increase of 12% in the number of students applying our bachelor programs in total, compared to last year. We might actually hope to achieve a grade requirement for some of our programs at next year's application deadline. As you know, after long debates and discussions, we have now applied for lowering the mathematics requirement for admission to three of our bachelor programs. I believe that this will make us considerably more competitive at next year's application deadline. Several other programs that made the same lowering of the mathematics requirement at our faculty this year compared to last year, experienced over 100% increase in the number of applicants.



This year we have in average 1.7 applicants for each bachelor study slot we have. It turns out that this number is barely above what is needed to simply fill all the study slots (admitting all qualified applicants), because many students who get an offer decline, and even some of those who accept the offer do not show up. The wonderful news in this respect is that our newcomer, [årsstudium i informatikk](#), has received an incredible number of 184 applicants! As this program is just starting up, we have only 10 study slots for it this year, which gives an amazing ratio of 18.4 applicants per slot. With this program, we have in average more than 2.5 applicants to each study slot in our undergraduate programs!

Our master programs are doing even better. For our master program in informatics, we see an increase of 23% in the number of applications compared to last year. For our joint master program with HVL in programming, the increase is 15%. In total, we have 243 applicants to our around 50 available master study slots, which gives almost 5 applicants for each study slot. Experience shows that only around half of the applicants are qualified, and around half of the applicants who receive an offer end up accepting it. Hence, we can expect to end up with around 60 new master students this semester, if we wish to. Recall that we also have master admittance in January every year, and we have already admitted 20 new master students earlier this year. I think the increasing number of master applications are particularly pleasing. As information technology becomes more and more crucial for our society, educating a larger number of IT specialists at master level is becoming more important every year.

Application numbers are of course just one part of the story. The next challenge is that all admitted students complete their degrees successfully and on time. We believe that higher application numbers will result in a more selective admission process, which again will result in more motivated students. But we have to do our part of the job, continue to reform our education, keep our programs up to date and relevant, and make sure that our students get all the support they need both scientifically and socially. The increasing application numbers come at the same time as we have just announced a position to expand our young research group in informatics didactics. With our recent and coming recruitments, I am now confident that we have the perfect team to educate our students in the best possible way.

I wish you a very nice weekend!

-Pinar

The Dean's Blog – Helge K. Dahle

The Dean's blog aims to inform us of ongoing work and processes at the Faculty of [Mathematics and Natural Sciences](#).

His latest postings: [Støtt opp om uavhengig grunnforskning](#) - [Sosial distansering](#) - [Omstilling i virrevandringens tid](#) - [Dugnadsånd i ei krise](#) - [Det er ikke nok å bare kunne litt programmering](#)



Current Issues [På Høyden - Khrono](#) – [News from NFR](#) – [News from UiB](#) – [Informatics on Facebook](#)

Corona – some updates

Check the UiB Corona webpage. It is utmost important that everybody checks [the coronavirus information page of the UiB](#) frequently.

Access to our building. Only Pinar, Inge, Linda, Stanislav and Olaf have access at to Datablokken. If you for some reason are in need for a short visit to your office, you can ask Linda for an appointment. If there is a technical urgency or you cannot connect to our local servers, please contact Stanislav for help.

E-learning course in Protective Measures. New of this week, the UiB offers an e-learning course in Protective Measures. The course is obligatory for students and staff returning to the workplace on the 27th of April (Phase 1 – no one from our department are included in this first returning phase), but is available for all students and staff to take. To be on the safe side, you will be asked to take the course if you make an appointment with Linda for a short visit to your office. The course platform is Mitt UiB, and you log on with your UiB username and password. [Take the course here!](#)

Measures for PhD Candidates and Postdoctoral Fellows. Up until now, there has been some confusion about contract extensions for PhD candidates and postdocs, but now you will find [updated and correct information here](#). Please notice that this link goes to the Norwegian version of the information. The English version of this information is still not updated – hopefully it will be soon. Questions can be addressed to Lene and/or Linda.

Follow us on social media – like and share!

Social media channels are important for both recruiting new students and communicating our work. By following us and liking or sharing our content (or simply watching it, in some cases), you can help lift our brand and reach more people and potential future students. At the same time, you will keep yourself informed about our outreach activities.



If you use these media, please follow us there:

[Department of informatics at UiB on Facebook](#)
[Department of informatics at UiB on Instagram](#)
[Department of informatics at UiB on Twitter](#)

[Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at UiB on YouTube](#)
[Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at UiB on Facebook](#)
[Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science at UiB on Instagram](#)
[Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at UiB on Twitter](#)

Norwegian Artificial Intelligence Research Consortium - NORA



Recall that our university is a member [NORA](#), which is a collaboration on artificial intelligence research and education between seven universities and two research centers of Norway.

If your research is related to AI, it might be a good idea to [subscribe to NORAs newsletter](#). You can also follow NORA on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to get the latest news on AI related research in Norway and Europe.

NORA would like to hear from you on your recent research achievements within AI. Please write to contact@nora.ai if you would like NORA to highlight your recent research on their webpage.

PhD updates

PhD defense - Srimathi Varadharajan



Foto/ill.: Srimathi Varadharajan, UiB

Srimathi Varadharajan will defend her thesis "*Hard mathematical problems in cryptography and coding theory*" on Tuesday 28th April at 14:00. [Link to the online defense will be announced here.](#)

- Opponent: Universitetslektor, ph.d. Robert Granger, Department of Computer Science, University of Surrey, Great Britain
- Opponent: Associate Professor, PhD Constanza Susana Riera, Institutt for data- og realfag, Høgskulen på Vestlandet
- Committee member: Professor, PhD Kjell Jørgen Hole, Institutt for informatikk, UiB
- Leader of the defense: Associate Professor Michal Walicki, Institutt for informatikk, UiB

All are welcome! Please find [the press release here.](#)

PhD defense – Torstein J. Strømme



Foto/ill.: Fredrik Lygre Bergesen

Torstein Strømme will defend his thesis "*Exploiting graph structures for computational efficiency*" on Thursday 7th May at 10:15. [Link to the online defense will be announced here.](#)

- Opponent: Researcher, PhD Marthe Bonamy, The French National Centre for Scientific Research, France
- Opponent: Junior professor , ph.d. Robert Ganian, Technischen Universität Wien, Austria
- Committee member: Professor, dr. scient. Fredrik Manne, Institutt for informatikk
- Leader of the defense: Professor Jan Arne Telle

All are welcome! Please find [the press release here.](#)

PhD defense – Daniel Hernandez Escobar



Foto/ill.: Ivette Raíces Cruz

Daniel Hernandez Escobar will defend his thesis "*Strong stability of C-stationary points for mathematical programs with complementarity constraints*" on Friday 8th May at 10:15. [Link to the online defense will be announced here.](#)

- Opponent: Privatdosent, dr.rer.nat. habil Harald Günzel, RWTH Aachen, Germany
- Opponent: Professor, dr.rer.nat. Wolfgang Achtziger, Friedrich-Alexander Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany
- Committee member: Professor, dr.rer.nat. Susanna Röblitz, Institutt for informatikk, UiB
- Leader of the defense: Associate Professor Anya Bagge, Institutt for informatikk, UiB

All are welcome! Please find [the press release here.](#)

ICT Research School Annual Meeting 2020: Save the date & call for volunteers

To all PhD students at the Department of Informatics,

As every year, we would like to encourage you to organize and participate in the annual meeting of the department's ICT research school!

This year's meeting has been scheduled for **26-27 October 2020 in Park Hotel Vossevangen**. We hope that these dates will be suitable for (most of) you. Due to the current outbreak of the Coronavirus we had to react fast and change already existing hotel reservations for other events (for April) in order to avoid huge financial losses. As not all of these events are "repeatable" at a later time of the year, we decided to use some of the existing bookings for the ICT Research School Annual Meeting.

We will, of course, closely monitor the situation and follow all rules and recommendations set by the Norwegian government and university leadership in relation to the outbreak of the Coronavirus. The meeting will only be held (at those dates in Voss) if it is safe for you and other department members, as well as potential presenters from outside the department joining the event, to participate! If this should not be the case, then we can still consider to hold a virtual meeting.

At this point, we would like to ask for **2-3 volunteers** who would like to contribute to **organizing the Annual Meeting 2020** (agenda, registration, website etc.)! To ensure continuity and sharing of best-practice routines, we would like to suggest that at least one former meeting participant is among the members of the organizing committee.

If you are interested in contributing to the organization of the event in 2020, then please send an email by **24 May 2020** to Stefanie.Meyer@uib.no with the following details: your name; the research group you belong to; I have participated in a previous annual meeting of the ICT research school yes/no; I would like to volunteer as organizer of the ICT research school Annual Meeting 2020.

For those of you who are not (yet) familiar with the research school's activities: The aim of the annual meeting is to strengthen networking and collaboration among the department's PhD candidates. Depending on the PhD candidates' own ideas, the program can include one to several keynote talks from local, national and/or international researchers, but the main part of the program is dedicated to presentations from fellow PhD candidates. The latter are usually held as "seminar/lecture on [an] individually selected subject", which contribute to the dissemination part of the training component.

Research, Science and Seminars ScienceNorway.no - forskning.no

Department seminars this semester

Since we had to cancel our department gathering that was planned to take place in Voss April 27-28, we turn some parts of the Voss program into several department Thursday seminars conducted via Zoom. So far we have three such seminars scheduled: April 30, May 7, and May 14.

Thursday April 30 at 14:15 on Zoom: Application numbers and good exam related practices



[Welcome all to this seminar on Zoom with meeting ID 972 651 447.](#)

Our colleagues Fredrik, Dag, Pål and Øystein have kindly agreed to provide for us a seminar on Zoom, with the following preliminary program:

- Welcome and introduction (Fredrik)
- Very fresh application numbers for admissions to our studies from the April 15 nationally coordinated deadline, and other useful statistics about our programs and how our students are doing (Øystein and Pål)
- Guidance for exam grading (sensorveiledning): what is it good for and examples of good practices (Dag and Fredrik)

The formal part of the seminar is planned to end at 15:00, including 5-10 minutes for questions. If there is an interest to continue the discussion, then we can continue for another half hour after a short break.

Thursday May 7 at 14:15 on Zoom: Open access agreements of UiB and how to use them



Public (European or Norwegian) funded research must be openly accessible. The universities in Norway have entered agreements with several of the large publishers so that each of us can publish there without our peers having to pay to read our publications. But how should one go ahead to benefit from such agreements and what if there is no agreement with the journal one wants to publish with?

Paul Simon Svanberg from University of Bergen Library will hold a seminar for the Department of informatics to explain to us how we can benefit from the existing agreements easily, and what to do in case there is no agreement with a particular publisher.

In fact, our university has established funds that we can all apply for open publishing in case there is no agreement covering a journal that we want to publish with.

It is important to check the [information available on open publishing at University of Bergen Library webpages](#) before the seminar. (See more information below.) There will be an opportunity to ask specific questions after the presentation.

The seminar will be held in English. [More information is available here.](#)

Everybody is welcome to attend the seminar on [Zoom with meeting ID 943 839 791.](#)

Thursday May 14 at 14:15 on Zoom: Ethics in computer science education



The seminar will be conducted via Zoom. The link to join will appear in the next newsletter.

[Please also follow this event on the web calendar of UiB.](#)

Ethical issues like privacy, biased algorithms, and unintended discriminating behavior from software are increasingly central in algorithm design and software development. At the department of informatics, there is no single course handling these issues; we try to incorporate these in all our courses, and it is so far left by large to the course lecturer. How can we achieve a more coherent and unified education and training in ethical issues in all our bachelor programs?

[Marija Slavkovic](#) is an associate professor at the Department of information and media sciences of our university. Her specialty is within the areas of machine ethics, logic reasoning, collective reasoning and decision making. Her background is from computer science and informatics, with a specialization in computational logic. She has extensive collaboration with our machine learning group, and she has co-supervised students with the optimization group.

Marija is regularly teaching a master level course on ethics in AI, and she is a frequent invited speaker on ethical dilemmas in computer science, especially in AI. She is a member of several national and international organizations involved in AI and multiagent systems, and she is a member of the educational forum of [NORA](#).

Marija will share with us her experiences with teaching ethics to information science students, and she will show us examples of unwanted behavior of software and unintended biases in algorithms design, which are very useful for informatics students to learn about and reflect upon. We hope that we will have a lively discussion at the end of the seminar about how we can achieve a more consolidated effort in educating our students on these ethical problems.

Publishing Open Access

The University of Bergen Library has prepared very good websites on the current status of local, national and international open access (OA) policies as well as their services related to OA publishing. Please have a look at their websites and make yourself familiar with the different policies as well as the existing publishing deals with several of the academic publishers. Furthermore, UiB has a publication fund for OA that can cover the article processing charges (APC) when publishing in eligible open access journals.

Before you (your group) pay(s) any fees for making an article openly available, please consult the webpages to see if you are entitled to a discount, may get the fees refunded through the publication fund, or maybe don't even have to pay anything based on an existing agreement with the publisher!

If you have questions, please contact the department's research coordinator [Stefanie Meyer](#).



[Publication fund for Open Access at UiB](#)



[Open access publishing deals](#)



[Open Access - what, why and how](#)

Upcoming funding opportunities

On a monthly basis, the department releases a comprehensive overview over [upcoming funding opportunities](#) on its website for [research support services](#). Please inform research coordinator [Stefanie Meyer](#) about all planned and ongoing funding applications! **This includes both applications you coordinate yourself, and those where you are included as a partner/collaborator!** At this point, we would like to highlight the following upcoming calls and funding/research-related events:



Researcher Projects 2020. To support scientific renewal and development in research, the Research Council has opened the following calls for researcher projects:

- [Researcher Projects for Scientific Renewal](#),
- [Researcher Projects for Young Talents](#),
- [Three-year Researcher Projects with International Mobility](#).

“Researcher projects are to contribute to important new insights, scientific publication, researcher training and international research collaboration.” In addition, each of the three calls has a special set of requirements and objectives that have to be taken into account when writing a grant application. **Application deadline: 20 May 2020.**



IKTPLUSS. The Research Council has an open call on [Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and Autonomous Systems](#). “The objective of this call is to further develop expertise and capacity in artificial intelligence, robotics and autonomous systems. Efforts are to help to move the research front, build vital competence and create new opportunities for people and society in the short and long term.”

Please note that these are collaborative projects where two or more of the project partners have to come from outside academia (i.e. the private or public sector), and have to stand for at least 10% of the effort. **Application deadline: open-ended.**



Collaborative and Knowledge-building Project.

The Research Council has pre-announced calls for Collaborative and Knowledge-building Projects that aim at “promot[ing] cooperation to develop R&D expertise and capacity in areas of importance to society and business and industry”.

- Collaborative Project to meet Societal and Industry-related Challenges: topics from energy, climate, ocean, health, biotechnology (and more) are included
- Knowledge-building Project for Industry: topics from renewable energy, oceans (and more) are included

“The calls [are] open to approved Norwegian research organisations in binding cooperation with relevant actors from public sector entities, non-governmental organisations, trade and industry and/or other private organisations.” Two or more of the project partners have to come from outside academia. **Application deadline: 2 September 2020.**



ERC Advanced Grant. “Are you an established, leading principal investigator who wants long-term funding to pursue a groundbreaking, high-risk project? The ERC Advanced Grant could be for you. Applicants for the ERC Advanced Grants [PIs] are expected to be active researchers who have a track-record of significant research achievements in the last 10 years. The [PIs] should be exceptional leaders in terms of originality and significance of their research contributions. No specific eligibility criteria with respect to the academic requirements are foreseen.” **Application deadline (not yet officially announced): 26 August 2020.**



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships.

The MSCA Individual Fellowships are highly attractive mobility grants for experienced researchers as they actively support the individuals’ careers. Researchers from all scientific disciplines can apply, and funding includes an allowance to cover living, travel and family costs as well as costs for training, networking, research, management and indirect costs. Find out more about MSCA-IF on this website.

Application deadline: 9 September 2020.



Innovative Medicines Initiative

(IMI). “Tackling cancer through artificial intelligence, antimicrobial resistance, neurodegenerative diseases, rare disease diagnosis, clinical trial data, and patient adherence are the topics proposed for IMI’s next Calls for proposals. [IMI has] published the draft texts of the topics that are slated for inclusion in IMI’s next Calls for proposals, IMI2 – Calls 22 and 23, on the Future Topics page of [their] website. The Calls are both scheduled for **launch on 23 June 2020.**”

Did you know?

Citizen Science. Citizen Science is an important policy orientation and an integral part of the concept of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). "It covers a range of different levels of participation: from raising public knowledge about science, encouraging citizens to participate in the scientific process by observing, gathering and processing data, right up to setting scientific agenda and co-designing and implementing science-related policies." [EU, Science with and for Society, [Work programme 2018-2020](#)]

The [EU-Citizen.Science project](#) has recently released a platform with information about citizen science as well as several examples. The main aim of the platform is to support the mainstreaming of citizen science.



Applied Artificial Intelligence Conference. The conference will be a virtual/online conference. **Event: 11 May 2020. [Registration](#) deadline: 10 May 2020.**

How to write competitive ERC StG & CoG Grant applications. The University of Bergen, together with Enspire Science and The Research Council of Norway, organize a workshop about ERC Starting and Consolidator Grant writing. **Event: 2 December 2020. [Registration](#) deadline: 26 November 2020.**



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Need help?

Please contact research coordinator [Stefanie Meyer](#) if you have questions with regard to your planned and ongoing funding applications! In addition, you can have a look at our websites for [research support services](#). There you will find a list of our services as well as a comprehensive overview over [upcoming funding opportunities](#).

*NB: Please also inform our research coordinator about all ongoing **contractual work** (contracts with funding sources, collaboration agreements with other institutions related to externally funded projects).*

Corona update

Research Council of Norway: [RCN's service updates related to COVID-19](#)

EU (Horizon 2020): [FAQ on COVID-19](#)

EU (ERC): [Coronavirus - business continuity measures at the ERC](#)

Trond Mohn Stiftelse: [Information for PIs and partners](#)

University of Bergen: [Projects influenced by COVID-19](#)

Vacant positions

Førsteamanuensis i informatikk fagformidling og utdanning (informatikk-fagdidaktikk)

Please find the announcement [here](#). Closing date: 25.05.2020.

Postdoctoral Research Fellow position in Informatics - Applied cryptology

Please find the announcement [here](#). Closing date: 30.04.2020.

PhD position in Informatics - Applied cryptology

Please find the announcement [here](#). Closing date: 30.04.2020.

Health, Safety and Environment

Kakeklubben online!



Kakeklubben is a social initiative for all colleagues who would like to practice their Norwegian language skills. The meetings are in Norwegian, at a pace that is easy for everyone with basic skills in Norwegian to follow and participate.

Kakeklubben meets every Wednesday at 12:00. In normal settings, we meet at the 4th floor lunch room, and the department orders cake. In the current situation, we are meeting online at 12:00 every Wednesday. Watch out for emails from David, and then come join us!