

## Status

### Papers for *Profession and Professionalism*, special edition

#### *Invitation*

Call for draft papers on  
Profession, Ethics and Social Responsibility

Title: Professional Responsibility

Drafts will be evaluated for publication in a special edition of  
The Journal

*PROFESSION AND PROFESSIONALISM*

<https://journals.hioa.no/index.php/pp/index>

Editorial board:

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Tom Skauge, Head of Norwegian Network for Professional Ethics

Professions in the sense of authorized expertise are central to all modern societies. In the public as well as in the private sector, professionals are important carriers of knowledge, of definitions of problems and -solutions. Professionals set the agenda for academic subject areas as well as for politics. Professionals are responsible for the distribution of substantial resources in open as well as in closed rooms.

There are trends that seem to indicate an historical increase in the influence of the professions in modern societies, whereas other trends indicate deprofessionalisation and a loss of social status for professions as well as professionals.

In Scandinavia the number of professional knowledge workers with higher education has increased significantly after WW II. As seen from this angle, the number of decision makers and trendsetters with a professional education is higher than ever, relatively speaking. Public and private budgets – to the degree that they are used as tools for societal development, distribution of resources and innovation – are also record big in Scandinavia. The research to be carried out by the professions based in various forms of evidence has also gradually been strengthened.

Several factors weaken the trendsetting influence of the professions. A number of professional educations are being criticized as lacking in quality, relevance and a being poorly balanced between academic and practice based knowledge. In societies where the demands for change are big in private and public sectors, educational providers are being challenged for a lack of flexibility as well as a lack of capacity for innovation and for interdisciplinary cooperation.

Professions, as well as professionals are being challenged by users, clients and customers who in some fields have excellent access to quality controlled professional knowledge, an example are the users of the health services who often challenge the relative monopoly of knowledge of the health professions.

A stronger will to govern politically through the centralization of educational institutions, research grants, New Public Management, systems of accreditations and systems of governance of academia, tend to undermine the professional authority that a subject based implementation of a profession is dependent upon. New information- and robot technology is threatening a number of professions – amongst them, engineering. The concept of *deprofessionalisation* may sum up some of these trends of development.

An important argument for the professional autonomy, and with it the freedom of tools and devices, a room for action protected by arrangements for authorization, etc., has been the explicit value based anchorage of the professions. The ethical codex of the professions emphasizing altruism – a reference to dutifully, unselfishly and correctly carry out a profession – is meant to secure the confidence of general society in the professions. This is the professions' contract with larger society and with their clients, customers and users.

Ethical embeddedness and ethical rules and regulations in diverse professional organisations vary along several dimensions: What are their significance for the profession and for the execution of the profession? What are their importance for the users? How important is social responsibility as defined by the professions themselves? Who is defined as legitimately interested parties?

The challenges to responsible professional action have not been diminished by global society's new demands on responsibility and sustainability as expressed in UN's 17 goals of sustainability. These challenges are addressed to agents in the public and private sector and to civil society.

The Board of Editors strongly encourages the co-authorage of contributions with researchers outside of the Nordic countries.

The Board of Editors has received some contributions, but would welcome more.

Plan of progress:

1. Abstract to the Network for Profession Ethics by the undersigned; deadline March 2.
2. Comments out at the latest March 12.
3. Deadline for draft article April 23.
4. Presentation at the seminar for the Journal in Bergen Monday May 6. 1100-1400 hrs.
5. Final manuscript to the Editorial Board of Profession and Professionalism for peer review September 1st
6. Publication spring 2020.

Yours sincerely,  
Tom Skauge

Head of the Working Committee of the Network for Professional Ethics

[www.profesjonsetikk.no](http://www.profesjonsetikk.no)