

Work programme
2013–2017

Programme
Gender balance in senior positions and research management – BALANSE

Work programme 2013 – 2017

**Programme for Gender Balance in
Senior Positions and Research Management – BALANSE**

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Table of Contents

1. Summary
2. Background
3. Objectives of the programme
4. Programme's structure and strategic perspectives
5. Communication and dissemination activity
6. International cooperation
7. Budget
8. Coordination with other related programmes and instruments at the Research Council
9. Organisation

1. Summary

The Programme on Gender Balance in Senior Positions and Research Management (BALANSE) is a policy-oriented programme at the Research Council and has a programme period of minimum five years, from 2013 to 2017. The primary objective is to improve the gender balance at the senior level in Norwegian research through new knowledge, learning and innovative measures.

Recruitment of both genders to research has been good for many years. This is why the low proportion of women among senior-level researchers and top-level management is cause for such concern. The BALANSE programme is the Research Council's new initiative to redress this problem.

Gender balance is critical for the quality of research, the relevance of research to society, and the competitiveness of research institutions. The vision is to become the European leader in gender balance in senior-level positions and research management.

The BALANSE programme seeks to improve the gender balance in senior-level positions in Norwegian research by promoting the research institutions' gender equality efforts targeted towards research and research management. The programme will support efforts to bring about cultural and structural change.

The BALANSE programme will serve as a national learning arena and develop a gender equality toolkit for use within the sector. This will be achieved through three main areas of activity:

- BALANSE projects;
- Knowledge development and new research;
- National learning arena.

2. Background

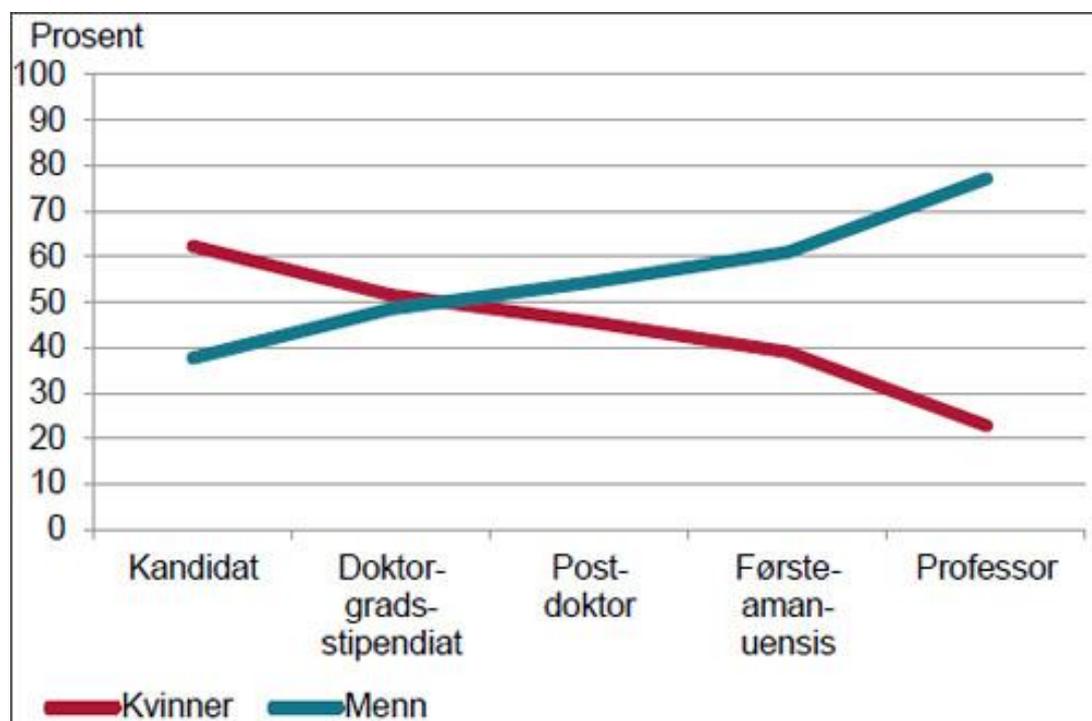
Recruitment of both genders to research has been good for many years. Although women currently comprise the majority of students and research fellows and almost half of the permanent academic staff, they held only 24 per cent of professorships at Norwegian universities and university colleges in 2012. Even in areas where women constitute the majority of doctoral students, it is men who comprise the majority of those recruited to research careers at the senior level.

Compared with other countries, Norway has a relatively large number of full professors among the academic employees, in part because Norwegian higher education institutions employ a scheme which allows individuals to seek promotion to the professor level. Given the distinctive features of the Norwegian position structure, relatively generous parental leave and the widespread availability of childcare, gender equality policy in general and policies targeted towards academia in particular, the proportion of women at the senior level is strikingly low. The slow rate of progress in Norwegian research gives cause for concern.

Gender balance in research is critical for research quality and the relevance of research to society, the credibility of the research system, and the capacity for renewal. Loss of talent and biased recruitment is both a democratic challenge and an obstacle to achieving the ambitious objectives set for Norwegian research.

Biased recruitment at the senior level and in research management is a common pattern internationally as well. Norwegian figures on gender distribution correspond with the EU average at both higher and lower position levels.

Norway is regarded around the world as a leader in gender equality. The persistent gender imbalance in the position hierarchy is not in keeping with this perception. While Norway and Europe have similar figures in terms of the proportion of women on the boards of institutions, Norway ranks as low as tenth place with regard to senior-level positions in research (*She Figures 2012*).



Prosent	Per cent
Kandidat	Student
Doktorgradsstipendiat	Doctoral research fellow
Post-doktor	Post-doctoral research fellow
Førsteamanusensis	Associate professor
Professor	Professor
Kvinner	Women
Menn	Men

(Source: Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education/Database for Statistics on Higher Education)

Figure 1: Distribution of women and men at various rungs of the career ladder at universities and university colleges in Norway in 2011¹

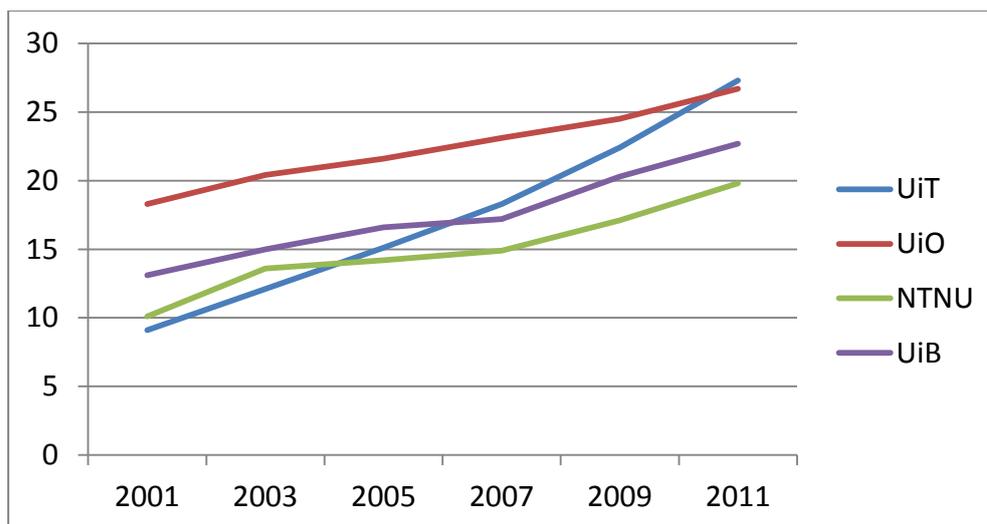
Studies have shown that gender equality measures in funding announcements and allocated grants are beneficial. In 2003 the Research Council launched the Centres of Excellence (SFF) scheme. All of the centres ended up with male directors, and male researchers dominated at the junior and senior levels as well.

When a new group of centres was established five years later, emphasis was placed on good gender balance in the grant applications. The Research Council openly sought more female project managers, and applicants were requested to give a detailed description of how they would work to recruit women and promote career development for female researchers. They were also notified that this would be followed up as part of the mid-term evaluation. An earmarked sum was set aside to encourage the centres to implement active measures.

The impact was pronounced. The Research Council received many applications with women centre directors. The proportion of female research fellows increased from 35 per cent for the first group of centres to 53 per cent at the new centres. At the post-doctoral level the proportion rose from 27 per cent to 44 per cent, and among senior-level researchers from 17 per cent to 23 per cent. (Research Council 2009)²

¹ Preliminary figures for 2011; these do not include post-doctoral and doctoral research fellows at health trusts with university hospital functions.

² “Gender equality in research – what works? An analysis of the grant allocation process used under the Research Council’s YFF, SFF and SFI schemes to promote excellence in research”. Research Council, Division for Science.



UiT	University of Tromsø
UiO	University of Oslo
NTNU	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
UiB	University of Bergen

(Source: Norwegian Social Science Data Services/Research and Education/Database for Statistics on Higher Education)

Figure 2: Proportion of female professors at the four largest Norwegian universities 2001–2011

As shown in Figure 2, all four of the largest universities have seen an increase in the proportion of women at the professor level in the past 10 years. This same trend occurs in other parts of the sector as well. All the same, overall progress in this area has been too slow, and it is clearly slower than could be expected if women and men had the same career development after degree completion (60 per cent women).

Experience shows that the introduction of simple, concrete measures can lead to a substantial improvement in the gender composition. However, to bring about far-reaching change, leaders who play an active role are needed. In 2002 the University of Tromsø had the lowest proportion of female professors of all the Norwegian universities. The proportion was less than 10 per cent, whereas in 2012 it was almost 30 per cent. In other words, in a 10-year period the University of Tromsø has moved from a position with the lowest to the highest proportion of women at the professor level. Through targeted efforts, concrete measures and, not least, active leadership, the institution has achieved significant changes in relatively few years.

There is growing recognition that gender imbalance is a problem which will not disappear by itself and which requires measures. The Research Council's BALANSE programme is part of the effort to redress this problem.

3. Objectives of the programme

The objective of the BALANSE programme is to promote gender balance at the senior level in Norwegian research and to strengthen structural and cultural renewal of the underlying research system. This objective will be achieved through:

- Knowledge development and knowledge sharing;
- Better research management;
- Career development measures.

To achieve a larger proportion of women in senior-level academic positions and research management, it is crucial to raise awareness and generate knowledge about the importance of gender balance and the factors that help to improve and promote it. The BALANSE programme will develop a gender equality toolkit for use by all parties in the sector. Knowledge sharing is just as important as knowledge development. The objective is to become a national supplier of knowledge about gender equality measures in research and research management.

The BALANSE programme will be development oriented and experimental. It is important for the BALANSE programme to support new solutions that bring lasting change, create new cultures, and enhance the institutions' competitiveness. Projects under the BALANSE programme are encouraged to combine measures designed to enhance academic culture, structure and researchers' career pathways.

Academic leadership positions have great influence over research and are vital for the development of quality within both research and education. Ensuring gender balance among research and project managers is therefore a priority area. The BALANSE programme will employ a variety of methods to promote discussion and investigation of, and foster career development in, research management.

There is an increasing need for effective research management. A key objective of the BALANSE programme is to raise the awareness of research managers about their role in recognising, developing and recruiting talented female researchers. Better gender balance requires active leadership and management strategies. The programme is therefore interested in projects that investigate research management as a thematic area.

The BALANSE programme is relevant for researchers and research managers throughout the entire research and innovation chain. The programme is also relevant for research administration and policy development as well as for interested parties in other countries. Moreover, the BALANSE programme aims to position Norway as an international leader in the area of gender balance in research.

Universities, university colleges, independent research institutes, and trade and industry are eligible to submit grant applications in response to calls for proposals issued by the BALANSE programme.

4. The programme's structure and strategic perspectives

The BALANSE programme is based on three main areas of activity:

- BALANSE projects;
- National learning arena;
- Knowledge development and new research.

BALANSE projects

The objective of BALANSE projects is to promote the research institutions' efforts to improve gender balance in research. To achieve this, it will be important to facilitate career development. Experience shows that a systematic, strategic approach is critical. BALANSE projects must have their basis in the institutions' own strategies and help the institutions to achieve their gender equality objectives.

For the individual project, the applicant institution must describe what it believes to be the institution's main structural and cultural challenges. A good analysis of these challenges will be a key criterion in the decision to award project funding. The applicant must show how the project will address these challenges through the development of new initiatives and strengthening of established measures. This also entails viewing the challenges and measures in light of research in the field. Priority will be given to projects demonstrating innovative thinking. All projects should include a plan for dissemination, knowledge sharing and evaluation.

The project will support systematic career development for women at levels near professor, senior researcher and/or research director. The projects may incorporate individual measures such as research sabbaticals, support for mobility, funding for day-to-day operations, training and experience in project management, and leadership development. The projects should involve documentation and analysis, i.e. systematic acquisition of knowledge.

National learning arena

The BALANSE programme will establish a learning arena at the programme level with two main target groups: leaders in the research sector and participants in the projects. The BALANSE programme will organise gatherings for sharing knowledge and experience, raising awareness, building networks and providing information. Some measures will be targeted specifically towards one of the target groups, while some events will include both groups and be open to other interested parties.

Knowledge development and new research

Knowledge development and new research is one of the objectives of the BALANSE programme. There is a need for more knowledge about the underlying structural and cultural processes that promote or obstruct gender balance in research. While this applies to the entire sector, it appears that the knowledge base for research in trade and industry is especially weak. There is also a lack of systematic knowledge about the significance of various management strategies and the impact of measures. Knowledge about these areas should be better integrated into the knowledge base for use in research and innovation policy.

The BALANSE programme is intended to follow a development oriented and experimental path. As a result, the programme board plans to implement follow-up research on the programme and the project portfolio, which will generate insight and create the potential for making sound decisions and incorporating changes along the way.

The BALANSE programme may initiate new research as part of its knowledge development activities. A more detailed research plan and a funding announcement will be prepared at a later point in time after the potential for Nordic cooperation has been clarified (see section 6).

5. Communication and dissemination activities

A learning programme

The BALANSE programme will emphasise the development of meeting places and other communication between the projects funded under the programme and between these projects and other users. One of the main objectives of the BALANSE programme is to promote learning from the measures that have been implemented, and communication and dialogue about these measures is therefore of great importance.

The BALANSE projects are expected to contribute important information about their results, which in turn may become part of a toolkit in which knowledge is shared with other users. The projects are expected to produce models for gender equality measures for use by others.

The programme will disseminate knowledge about the importance of gender balance as well as about instruments for achieving better gender balance.

The individual projects funded under the BALANSE programme may have specific target groups and users. The programme will encourage the projects to communicate actively with these and convey information about their experiences.

Prioritised secondary objectives and instruments for communication activities are:

- Meeting places;
- Follow-up research;
- Knowledge sharing;
- Publications.

The BALANSE programme has established and will further develop its own channels of communication in the form of newsletters, webpages, programme conferences, etc. as well as use external channels such as KILDEN – Information Centre for Gender Research in Norway, forskning.no, the mass media, meeting places and other networks.

The BALANSE programme will initiate cooperation and knowledge sharing across the BALANSE projects and with other projects and programmes at the Research Council.

6. International cooperation

The Nordic countries

Knowledge development and new research is one of the programme's three main areas of activity. However, because the programme is policy oriented, the funds set aside for new research will be limited. Cooperation between several Nordic actors may increase the level of research activity and open up the possibility of conducting interesting Nordic comparisons.

In 2013, the Nordic Council of Ministers published the report entitled *The Nordic region – a step closer to gender balance in research? Joint Nordic strategies and measures to promote gender balance among researchers in academia.*

The report makes three recommendations for further efforts. One of these recommendations has a direct connection to the BALANSE programme: “*A Nordic research programme on gender balance in research will be established under the auspices of NordForsk and/or the Joint Committees for Nordic Research Councils with funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic countries.*”

The Research Council will seek to launch a joint Nordic initiative to provide co-funding for this type of research.

Europe

Gender balance and gender perspectives receive considerable attention in European research and innovation policy. They are included as key topics in the European Commission's plans for realising the European Research Area (ERA) and are followed up in a number of forums and initiatives. Norway takes an active part in these efforts.

The Research Council's *Policy for gender equality and gender perspectives in research (2013-2017)* states that Norway is to play a leading international role in Horizon 2020, the development of the ERA and in Science Europe to promote gender balance in research and innovation.

The Research Council participates in the ERA-Net known as *GENDER-NET*: “Promoting gender equality in research institutions and the integration of the gender dimension in research contents.” *GENDER-NET* is a policy-oriented ERA-Net consisting of partners from 11 countries in Europe, Canada and the US. The partners are ministries, research funding agencies and research-performing institutions. The participating countries are required to have national schemes/measures for promoting gender equality and gender balance in research. The purpose is to share “best practice” and develop new policy proposals. The Research Council is a partner in *GENDER-NET* on the basis of the BALANSE programme. The Committee for Gender Balance in Research (the KIF Committee) is affiliated through the development of the website *Gender Balance in Research – Norway* and as the initiator of the national Gender Equality Award. The Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education will be included through its efforts to develop indicators and deliver comparable European statistics on gender distributions in research for use in the publication *She Figures*.

The gender distribution in internationalisation instruments at the Research Council is especially imbalanced, with a lower proportion of women among project managers than the average in Europe. The BALANSE programme seeks to contribute effective measures for changing this.

7. Budget

The programme received its first allocation from the 2013 national budget with NOK 7 million from the Ministry of Education and Research. The allocation in 2014 is NOK 12 million.³

Until now the BALANSE programme has been funded by an allocation from the Ministry of Education and Research. In the introductory phrase the programme has been exploring the possibility of co-funding from the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion as a means of increasing its level of activity. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion allocated a total of NOK 20 million to the Programme for Gender Research (2008–2012). Since that programme was phased out, the ministry has so far not indicated any interest in allocating funding to programme activities on gender equality through the Research Council.

Owing to the programme's focus on the *entire* research sector, including trade and industry, the anticipated results and learning outcomes, the BALANSE programme is highly relevant for several of the ministries, especially the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, in addition to the Ministry of Education and Research.

Time frame

Plans call for an initial programme period of five years (2013–2017). The programme board recommends that the BALANSE programme should run for a period of 10 years. This is necessary to achieve results in keeping with the objectives of the programme. An evaluation will be conducted after five years with a view to continuing the programme for another five years.

³ As of mid-November 2013, the Research Council has not yet received an allocation letter from the Ministry of Education and Research for 2014, and the budget for 2014 has not been reviewed by the Executive Board of the Research Council. The Research Council's zero-growth proposal calls for an increase of NOK 5 million in 2014 for a total of NOK 12 million and a further increase of NOK 8 million in 2015 for a total of NOK 20 million. Contingent on the final budget framework approved by the Storting, the budget for the programme period 2013–2017 will come to NOK 79 million.

8. Coordination with other related programmes and instruments at the Research Council

The BALANSE programme has great aspirations, but a limited level of activity. The programme aims to influence the entire research system. The BALANSE programme is not restricted to specific disciplines or subject areas, as the entire research sector lies within its scope. The BALANSE programme will therefore initiate cooperation with a wide range of programmes.

9. Organisation

The programme board

The overall responsibility for the programme lies with the Division for Society and Health, which has appointed the BALANSE programme board. The BALANSE programme board administers the programme on behalf of the Research Council and is organised under and reports to the Research Board via the department director and the executive director of the division. The programme board's tasks are primarily strategic in nature. The programme board is charged with ensuring that the programme meets its designated objective and is implemented as optimally as possible in accordance with the work programme and other stipulated plans and within the parameters approved by the division research board.

The programme board was appointed by the Research Board of the Division for Society and Health in January 2013 for the period from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2016. The programme board is comprised of the following nine members:

- Knut Liestøl, Professor, Department of Informatics, University of Oslo (chair)
- Marit Boyesen, Rector, University of Stavanger
- Astrid Bårdgard, Deputy Director General, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Bergen
- Eivind Engebretsen, Professor, Institute of Health and Society, University of Oslo
- Annita Fjuk, Head of Research Program – Service Innovation, Telenor Group, Research & Future Studies
- Karina Langseth-Manrique, Director, GE Healthcare AS
- Erik Litborn, Programme Manager, VINNOVA, Sweden
- Ingeborg Lund, Vice President, Human Resources, SINTEF
- Curt Rice, Professor, Department of Language and Linguistics, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Work programme

The work programme was prepared on the basis of two reports: *Women's and men's career cycle in Norwegian research. A survey report* (NIFU, 2012) and *Likestilling i forskningssektoren* ("Gender equality in the research sector") (KILDEN, 2012), as well as

on recommendations from a resource group (work programme committee) and input gained from an external consultation round. The resource group was comprised of Curt Rice, Eivind Engebretsen, Ingeborg Lund, Karina Langseth-Manrique and Knut Liestøl. The work programme was written by Lise Christensen and Ingeborg W. Owesen of the BALANSE programme's administration.

Programme administration

- Ingeborg W. Owesen, Senior Adviser (Programme Coordinator)
- Lise Christensen, Special Adviser
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