

Equality Action Plan for the Research Council of Norway

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Content

Equality Action Plan for the Research Council of Norway.....	2
1. Preface.....	2
2. Introduction.....	2
The Research Council’s role and mandate	2
Legislation.....	3
3. The current equality situation/status.....	3
Ongoing equality work	3
Diversity (and inclusion)	3
Recruitment.....	3
Payroll system:.....	3
Management information:.....	4
4. Involvement in work on the plan	4
5. Facts and statistics.....	4
Statistics as of October 2021	4
6. The Research Council’s measures for the period 2022–2024	7
General information about the implementation of the action plan	7
Principles for the internal equality work.....	7
Dedicated resources for implementation of the equality work.....	7
Focus areas and measures in the period 2022–2024.....	7

Equality Action Plan for the Research Council of Norway

1. Preface

The Research Council of Norway's equality efforts are aimed at promoting equality and combating discrimination among employees regardless of their gender, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion and beliefs, functional ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and age.

Equality is not just about gender balance, but also about equal opportunities and fair distribution of resources. Equality requires long-term and genuine willingness to change. There are many parties involved and considerations to make when resources are allocated and new personnel are recruited. In day-to-day operations, equality considerations can often be set aside unless goals have been defined and integrated in the organisation and responsibility has been clearly assigned.

Requirement for a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in Horizon Europe

From and including 2022, the European Commission is introducing a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) requirement at the organisational level for applicants and partners in Horizon Europe calls.

2. Introduction

The Research Council's role and mandate

The Research Council enables the best research and innovation. We endeavour to create a society in which research is conducted, used and shared, and contribute to the transition towards a more sustainable society. The Research Council is part of the national, European and global research and innovation system.

The Research Council is a national strategic research agency responsible for strengthening the knowledge base and helping to meet society's need for research. On behalf of the Government, we invest around NOK 11 billion per year in research and innovation projects. Our task is to ensure that the best research and innovation projects are granted funding.

The Research Council's ambition is to be a driving force for gender balance and gender perspectives in research and innovation. [The Research Council's policy for gender balance and gender perspectives in research and innovation](#) describes our intention to work towards gender equality in society, to promote research of the highest quality by fostering the most talented researchers, to create a framework that supports well-functioning research groups and to ensure a breadth of perspectives that enhance explanatory power and innovation.

[The Research Council's Strategy \(2020–2024\) Empowering ideas for a better world](#) states that

- The Research Council will invest in research and innovation to promote (...) an inclusive, diverse and equal society (...).
- The Research Council's policy instruments seek to encourage institutions to implement researcher recruitment and career development processes that promote gender balance and diversity.

- Gender and diversity perspectives must be carefully assessed and integrated where relevant.

Legislation

Act No 51 of 16 June 2017 relating to equality and a prohibition against discrimination (Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act 2017)

- Sections 26 and 26 a of the Act set out the activity duty of employers and the duty of employers to issue a statement (reporting duty).
- These duties mean that all public sector employers and all private sector employers with more than 50 employees are obliged to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote equality.
- The activity duty entails a requirement to
 - Investigate whether there is a risk of discrimination or other barriers to equality
 - Analyse the causes of identified risks
 - Implement measures suited to counteract discrimination and promote greater equality and diversity in the undertaking
 - Evaluate the results of efforts made
- The reporting duty means that employers must issue a statement in the annual report or another document available to the general public on the actual status of gender equality in the undertaking and what the undertaking is doing to comply with its activity duty.

This equality action plan contributes to meeting the Research Council's obligations pursuant to the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act.

3. The current equality situation/status

Ongoing equality work

Diversity (and inclusion)

The Research Council's diversity work forms an integrated part of collaboration between the management and the employee representatives. However, the whole organisation must contribute in order to succeed with the diversity and inclusion efforts. Emphasis is placed on broad involvement in equality work by employees throughout the organisation through e.g. workshops and lectures. The work also includes obtaining knowledge about how to make strategic efforts in diversity. Our ambition is to comply with the Norwegian standard for diversity management as far as possible.

Recruitment

If there are several applicants with approximately equal qualifications for a vacant position, applicants from the gender with less than 40% of employees in the category of position in question shall be preferred, cf. our appointment regulations.

Payroll system:

The main goal of the Research Council's pay policy is to recruit and retain desired expertise, ensure that we generate results more efficiently and create financial security and welfare for our employees.

Openness surrounding the pay policy and its outcomes is important to monitor gender balance, prevent unintentional consequences of the payroll system and prevent any misunderstandings and unclarity regarding the stipulation of pay.

Every year, the Research Council prepares wage statistics that are available to all employees through the quality system. Further statistics are prepared in connection with wage negotiations which are made available to trade union representatives.

In 2019, an equal pay assessment was carried out in line with the recommendations of the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud. The conclusion was that there are no systematic differences in the way women and men are prioritised in our wage negotiations.

Management information:

The Research Council has a management information system that provides relevant management information about flexitime balances, sickness absence, holidays, age composition and full-time equivalents (including permanent/temporary/stand-ins/hired employees) etc. The system does not currently provide gender-disaggregated data.

4. Involvement in work on the plan

The area for business administration and technology represented by the HR Director was assigned responsibility for preparing the plan and appointed a working group with participants from several areas of the organisation. The participants had particularly relevant expertise for the work.

All employees were given the opportunity to participate in a simple survey (October 2021) to provide input to the Research Council's internal equality action plan, where they were asked two questions:

1. What, in your opinion, are our challenges as regards equality?
2. Do you have any suggestions for what measures the Research Council should take to meet these challenges?

The input mainly concerned topics relating to pay policy and career development, organisational culture and decision-making processes, participation and diversity. This input was an important element in the further work on the plan.

5. Facts and statistics

Statistics as of October 2021

Every year, the Research Council maps the differences between women and men in terms of parental leave taken, temporary employment and part-time employment. Every other year, a statutory mapping is also carried out of the differences between women and men in relation to pay and gender balance at different position levels/job categories.

Data relating to position categories:

Table 1 below shows the gender distribution for all employees in total and within each job category. As of 25 October 2021, the Research Council had a total of 443 employees, with a proportion of women of 66 per cent.

For all position categories, with the exception of the 'manager' category, there is a predominance of women. The gender distribution among managers is almost balanced. As for other groups, the proportion of women decreases the higher the position level.

Table 1: Gender distribution at various position levels/categories

	Women	Men	Total	Proportion of women
Total	291	152	443	66%
Consultant, Senior consultant, Adviser	71	10	81	88%
Senior adviser	119	60	179	66%
Special adviser	81	61	142	57%
Manager	20	21	41	49%

Data about part-time employment and temporary employees

Of all employees, 6.2 per cent work part-time, meaning that the employee has requested a reduced position. No employees work part-time involuntarily. A considerably higher number of women than men work part-time; see Table 2.

Table 2: Gender balance, actual part-time employment

Part-time, women	Part-time, men
4.4%	1.8%

The proportion of temporary employees is 4.8 per cent, with an even gender balance. Table 3 below shows the gender distribution for all employees and for temporary employees.

Table 3: Gender balance for all employees and temporary employees

All employees		Temporary employees	
Women	Men	Women	Men
66%	34%	2.4%	2.4%

Data about recruitment:

At the end of October 2021, recruitment numbers show that almost an equal number of women and men apply for a position with the Research Council. Among those recruited, the gender balance is good, with a proportion of women of 52 per cent; see Table 4.

Table 4: The gender balance between applicants and newly recruited employees

Recruitment*			
Female applicants	Male applicants	Recruited so far this year women	Recruited so far this year men
47%	53%	52%	48%
123	137	12	11

*externally recruited to permanent positions

Data about gender differences in pay:

For the Research Council as a whole, the difference in pay between women and men is around 12%, calculated on the basis of an average annual salary. Looking at the differences in pay in relation to the job category, the biggest difference is found at the senior adviser level, which is the group with most employees and with a relatively high proportion of women. The highest proportion of women is found in the lower job categories – adviser/consultant. The manager category includes the Chief Executive.

Table 5: Gender balance per job category, number and percentage, annual salary

	Number of women	Number of men	Women's annual salary as a percentage of men's annual salary
Total	291	152	88%
Consultant, Senior consultant, Adviser	71	10	103%
Senior adviser	119	60	95%
Special adviser	81	61	97%
Manager	20	21	101%

In the Research Council's annual report for 2020, it is pointed out that there are *'most men in disciplines with the toughest competition in the market (including IT and technology). These candidates' market value is often higher than in disciplines dominated by women.'* This also reflects the situation elsewhere in society, cf. Statistics Norway's wage statistics.

Bullying, harassment and unwanted sexual attention

The Research Council has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying and harassment. Employee surveys include questions about this topic. The following question was asked in the employee survey in 2019 and 2021:

- Have you been subjected to bullying or harassment in the workplace in the past 12 months?
- Have you experienced unwanted sexual attention or troublesome or offensive comments in the workplace in the past 12 months?
- How often have you experienced this?

Of those who responded to the 2021 survey, 3 per cent reported that they had been subjected to bullying or harassment in the workplace in the past 12 months (sent out in January 2021). Of those who had experienced bullying or harassment, 8 per cent experience it on a weekly or daily basis. Twenty-five per cent experience it monthly, while the rest have experienced it once or a few times in the past 12 months. We do not have gender-disaggregated data from the survey.

The Research Council has guidelines and procedures for how to handle bullying, harassment and unwanted sexual attention in which the following is specified:

- Contact your immediate superior as soon as possible, or the management level above
- Alternatively, you can contact the local safety delegate
- Alternatively, contact HR, which can give you advice

The whistleblowing procedures and ethical guidelines are available in the quality system on the intranet. All new employees are informed about these documents in their introduction interview.

6. The Research Council’s measures for the period 2022–2024

General information about the implementation of the action plan

The action plan covers the period 2022–2024 and will be adjusted and renewed by the end of the period, with a focus on experience and goal attainment. We will consider the need to revise the plan after the first year. Equality work is an ongoing process.

Principles for the internal equality work

The internal equality work must be seen in conjunction with the Research Council’s overriding ambitions in this area, as set out in the Research Council’s strategy, the Policy for gender balance and gender perspectives in research and innovation, and other relevant governing documents. Given the Research Council’s social mission, we endeavour to achieve a strong link between our external activities and the situation within the organisation in this area.

Dedicated resources for implementation of the equality work

Responsibility for following up the Research Council’s equality action plan rests with the employer and is delegated in the HR Director’s line organisation. Up to 0.3 full-time equivalents are set aside for this work in the line organisation.

The Research Council’s joint allocation for competence development is made available for the implementation of relevant competence-raising measures in the action plan.

Focus areas and measures in the period 2022–2024

Gender balance in recruitment	
Objective	Measure
A more even gender balance in all job categories with an ambition of 60/40.	Focus on gender balance when recruiting employees for all positions. Practice moderate gender quotas in cases where two candidates have the same or corresponding qualifications.

Measures to combat bullying, harassment and unwanted sexual attention	
Objective	Measure
Zero tolerance for and prevention of bullying, harassment and unwanted sexual attention	Raise awareness of this topic through workshops/courses for managers and employees. Monitor/map occurrence through the employee survey.

Gender balance in management and decision-making processes	
Objective	Measure
Raise awareness about the gender composition of working groups and boards appointed by the Research Council	Gender balance as an additional consideration when establishing internal working groups/projects. Gender balance as an additional criterion when appointing boards.

Organisational culture and career development	
Objective	Measure
Highlight career development opportunities	Maintain the possibility of internal mobility. Highlight internal mobility through statistics. Provide information about and make active use of the strategic competence plan. Highlight its contents and opportunities through the performance appraisal interview. Organise at least two staff lunch seminars, breakfast meetings etc. about career development.
Raise knowledge and awareness to combat prejudice and internalised discriminatory attitudes.	Organise courses or lectures on the topic.
Increase acceptance of the fact that colleagues and future colleagues may have a gender identity that does not fall into the woman/man categories.	Facilitate the inclusion of more gender categories than man/woman in our systems.

Wage policy	
Objective	Measure
Raise knowledge about and increase transparency on our wage policy and payroll system	Continue gender-disaggregated wage statistics in line with the reporting requirements and make the statistics available in the quality system. Introduce annual reporting of differences between women and men in relation to pay and

	<p>gender balance at different position levels/job categories.</p> <p>Ensure that information about the pay policy and payroll system is provided within the organisation.</p>
<p>Increase knowledge of the distribution of women and men in relation to professional backgrounds in the various areas.</p>	<p>Provide input on a future solution for the Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management (DFØ) proposing that professional backgrounds should be registered to shed light on any differences in pay between genders and disciplines/professional backgrounds.</p>