

Action plan for gender equality at the Research Council of Norway

Innhold

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1. Preface

The Research Council of Norway's gender equality work is intended to promote gender equality and combat discrimination among employees regardless of gender, ethnicity, national origin, language, religion and belief, functional ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and age.

Gender equality is not only about gender balance, but also equal opportunities and fair distribution of resources. Achieving gender equality requires a long-term and real willingness to change. When resources are to be allocated and appointments made, there are many actors involved and many considerations. In day-to-day operations, gender equality considerations can quickly lose if goals are not stated, clearly anchored and responsibilities clearly placed.

2. Introduction

The Research Council's role and mandate

The Research Council makes the best research and innovation possible. We work for a society where research is created, used and shared, and we contribute to restructuring and 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 body responsible for increasing the knowledge base and helping to meet society's need for research. On behalf of the Government, we invest approximately NOK 11 billion a year in research and innovation projects. Our task is to ensure that the best research and innovation projects receive funding.

The Research Council's ambition is to be an active driving force for gender balance and gender perspectives in research and innovation. The [Research Council's policy for gender balance and gender perspectives](#) states that we shall contribute to gender equality in society, promote research of the highest quality by taking care of the best research talents, facilitate well-functioning research environments and ensure a breadth of perspectives that provide good explanatory power and innovative solutions.

The [Research Council's strategy](#) under the target area business development defines relevant priorities:

- We work systematically to have relevant **expertise** and sufficient capacity for future challenges and opportunities
- We facilitate **well-being and engagement** at work, through good work processes, mastery and development opportunities, and inclusive social and professional arenas

Legislation

Act No. 51 of 16 June 2017 on Equality and Prohibition of Discrimination (Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act 2017, Idl.)

- Sections 26 and 26a of the Act establish what is known as the activity and reporting duty
- The activity and reporting obligation requires all public employers and all private employers with more than 50 employees to work actively, purposefully and systematically for gender equality
- The duty to take action entails a requirement to:
 - Investigate whether there is a risk of discrimination or other obstacles to gender equality
 - Analysing the causes of identified risks

- Implement measures that are suitable to counteract discrimination, and contribute to increased equality and diversity in the business
 - Assessing the results of gender equality work
- The duty to report means that the employer's annual report or other publicly available document must account for the actual state of gender equality in the enterprise and what measures the employer has implemented to fulfil its duty to take action.

This action plan for gender equality contributes to the fulfilment of the Research Council's obligations under the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act.

3. The gender equality situation/state today

Ongoing gender equality work

Diversity (and inclusion)

The Research Council's diversity work is rooted in the collaboration between management and employee representatives. To succeed in the work with diversity and inclusion, the entire organisation must contribute. In the work, emphasis is placed on broad involvement of employees throughout the organisation, preferably through the management in the line. The work also includes gathering knowledge about how to work strategically with diversity, including in recruitment. The ambition is that we follow the Norwegian standard for diversity management to the greatest extent possible.

Recruitment

If several applicants apply for vacant positions who have approximately the same qualifications for the position, preference shall be given to applicants from the gender that has less than 40 per cent of the employees in the position group in question, cf. our appointment regulations.

The payroll system

The Research Council's salary policy has as its main objective to recruit and retain the desired expertise, to stimulate us to achieve our results more efficiently and to create financial security and a welfare base for our employees.

Transparency about the wage policy and its outcome is important for monitoring gender balance, preventing unintended consequences of the wage system, and preventing any misunderstandings and ambiguities related to wage determination.

The Research Council compiles salary statistics annually that are available to all employees through the Quality System.

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

At the end of 2023, the Research Council's GEP was audited by Horizon Europe («random compliance check»).

4. Involvement in the work on the plan

The division for organisational development and operations, represented by the HR director, was given responsibility for the preparation of the original plan for 2022–2024. In this connection, a working group was set up 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 action plan for gender equality, in which they were asked to answer two questions:

1. What do you see as our challenges when it comes to gender equality?
2. Do you have suggestions for measures for what the Research Council should do to meet these challenges?

Topics for the input were mainly related to salary policy and career development, organisational culture and decision-making processes, participation and diversity. The input was important in the further work on the plan.

This updated plan, effective from 2025, follows the Research Council's strategy and has been revised and updated based on the original plan (2022–2024). The plan is reviewed and possibly revised and updated every two years.

5. Facts and statistics

Statistics as of December 2024.

Every year, the Research Council maps differences between women and men when it comes to taking parental leave, temporary employees and part-time employees. Every two years, a statutory survey of differences between women and men in pay and gender balance is also carried out at different job levels/groups.

Data related to job categories:

Table 1 below shows the gender distribution for all employees in total, and within each job category. As of 31.12.2024, the Research Council had a total of 390 employees, with a female proportion of 60 per cent.

In all job categories, except the category manager, there is a predominance of women. The proportion of women in the group of adviser, senior adviser and special adviser decreases with higher FTE levels.

Table 1: Gender distribution at different job levels/groups December 2024:

	Women	Men	Total	Proportion of women
<i>The Research Council as a whole</i>	234	156	390	60 %
<i>Consultant, Senior Consultant</i>	6	5	11	55 %
<i>Advisor</i>	39	17	56	70 %
<i>Senior Advisor</i>	93	54	147	63 %
<i>Special Adviser</i>	82	62	144	57 %
<i>Leader</i>	14	18	32	44 %

Data on part-time work and temporary employees:

4.5 per cent of the employees work part-time, where the employee has applied for a reduced position. There are no employees with involuntary part-time positions. There are more women than men who work part-time, see Table 2.

Table 2: Gender balance in part-time work 2024:

<i>Part-time women</i>	<i>Part-time men</i>
3,3 %	1,2 %

The proportion of temporary employees is 3.8 per cent. There are more men than women who are temporarily employed, see Table 3.

Table 3: Gender balance temporary employees 2024:

<i>Temporarily employed women</i>	<i>Temporarily employed men</i>
1,5 %	2,3 %

Data on recruitment:

Recruitment figures for 2024 show that there are more women than men applying for a position at the Research Council. Among those recruited, the gender balance is good, with a female share of 48 per cent, see Table 4.

Table 4: Gender balance between applicants and new recruits 2024:

<i>Recruitment*</i>			
<i>Female applicants</i>	<i>Male applicants</i>	<i>Women Recruited in 2024</i>	<i>Men recruited in 2024</i>
851	496	21	23
63%	37%	48%	52%

* externally recruited (permanent and temporary)

Data on gender pay gaps:

For the Research Council as a whole, the pay gap between women and men is 7 per cent, calculated on the basis of average annual salary, compared with 8 per cent in 2023. The results show a positive development, and the differences are somewhat smaller than in society in general.

Table 5: Gender balance by position level, number and percentage of annual earnings December 2024:

	<i>Number of women</i>	<i>Numbers</i>	<i>Percentage of women's annual earnings out of men's annual earnings</i>
<i>The Research Council as a whole</i>	234	156	93,4 %
<i>Consultant, Senior Consultant</i>	6	5	125,0 %
<i>Advisor</i>	39	17	104,7 %
<i>Senior Advisor</i>	93	54	94,0 %

<i>Special Adviser</i>	82	62	95,3 %
<i>Leader</i>	14	18	111,2 %

Bullying, harassment and unwanted sexual attention

The Research Council has zero tolerance for bullying and harassment. The employee surveys include questions that map perceived bullying, harassment, unwanted sexual attention, threats of violence or physical violence in the workplace during the last 12 months.

The results of the 2023 employee survey show that few cases of undesirable incidents or unwanted behaviour have been registered.

The Research Council has guidelines and procedures, which are available in a quality system, for how to deal with bullying, harassment or unwanted sexual attention, where the following are specified:

- Contact your immediate manager as soon as possible, or the management level above
- Alternatively, take it up with the local safety representative
- Alternatively, contact HR who can advise you

The whistleblowing routines and the Code of Ethics are available in a quality system on the intranet.

6. The Research Council's measures from 2025

General information on the implementation of the action plan

The action plan will apply from 2025, and it will be adjusted and renewed in accordance with the Research Council's strategy, with an emphasis on experience and goal attainment. The work on gender equality and diversity is an ongoing process.

Principles for internal gender equality work

The internal gender equality work must be seen in the context of the Research Council's overall 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 policy documents. Given the Research Council's social mission, we strive for good coherence between our external activities and internal conditions in the organisation in this field.

Dedicated resources for the implementation of gender equality work

The responsibility for following up the Research Council's action plan for gender equality lies with the employer and is delegated to the HR director. Up to 0.3 man-years are set aside in the line for this work.

The Research Council's joint allocation for competence development will be made available for the implementation of relevant competence-enhancing measures in the action plan.

Focus areas and measures from 2025 onwards

Gender balance in recruitment	
Goal	Measures from 2025
A more even gender balance in all job categories with an ambition of 60/40.	Focus on gender balance in recruitment to all positions. Practice moderate gender quotas where two candidates are equally or similarly qualified.

Measures against bullying, harassment and unwanted sexual attention	
Goal	Measures from 2025
Zero tolerance for, and prevention of, bullying, harassment and unwanted sexual attention	<p>Further develop managers and employees based on trust-based leadership.</p> <p>Relevant courses in Videocation, including: "Trust-Based Leadership" and "Course in Inclusive Leadership"</p> <p>Inform about the whistleblowing routines and the applicable whistleblowing channel</p> <p>Monitor/map occurrence through the employee survey.</p>

Gender balance in leadership and decision-making	
Goal	Measures from 2025
Increased awareness of the gender composition of working groups and boards appointed by the Research Council	<p>Gender balance as an additional assessment when internal working groups/projects are established.</p> <p>Gender balance as an additional criterion for the appointment of boards.</p>

Organisational culture and career development	
Goal	Measures from 2025
Clarify opportunities for career development	<p>Continuing internal career development through Among other things, internal mobility that is made visible in the tertiary reporting and the performance appraisal.</p> <p>Develop new common areas of competence based on strategic competence needs in the current strategy, including an action plan</p>

Increase knowledge and awareness to counteract prejudice and internalised discriminatory attitudes.	<p>Increased knowledge and awareness related to prejudice through the management philosophy of trust-based leadership, which is the basis for the cultural development of managers and employees.</p> <p>Relevant courses in Videocation, including: "Trust-Based Leadership" and "Course in Inclusive Leadership"</p>
Increased recognition that colleagues and future colleagues may have a gender identity that does not fit into woman/man.	<p>Emphasise increased awareness of one's own attitudes and behavior related to diversity, including in connection with Pride and with measures related to leadership based on trust-based leadership.</p>

Salary policy	
Goal	Measures from 2025
Increase knowledge and transparency about wage policy and the wage system	<p>Continue gender-disaggregated wage statistics in line with reporting requirements and make these available in the quality system.</p> <p>Continue annual reporting on differences between women and men in pay and gender balance at different job levels/groups. Continue internal information about the payroll policy and the payroll system.</p>