

# FROM VISION TO REALITY

## - A SUMMARY

How is the work on gender equality and diversity at Norwegian research and educational institutions organised and evaluated? This report aims to give an overview of this work. The report is based on an analysis of the results of a survey conducted by the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (the KIF committee) of research institutes, university colleges and universities.

The report describes the participating institutions' work on gender equality and diversity, and presents

- how the work is organised;
- the institutions' evaluations of their own work;
- how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on their work on gender equality and diversity.

The findings show that there is a need to boost the gender equality and diversity efforts at Norwegian institutions for research and higher education.



Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research



## THE WORK ON GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MUST BE STRENGTHENED

Our findings suggest that there is a need to strengthen the efforts in gender equality and diversity at Norwegian universities, university colleges and research institutes. Relatively few resources are allocated for this work at the institutions, the respondents want to see a higher level of competence in gender equality and diversity among institution managers, and the smaller institutions seem to need better follow-up. However, it is important to consider the institutions' differing needs for measures.

**We have also identified a need to conduct more surveys about this work and to do this in a more systematic way, particularly in the following areas:**

- Discrimination and abuse of power at research institutes, university colleges and universities, with an emphasis on employees' and students' experiences of discrimination and sexual harassment.
- The value of general gender equality and diversity measures, such as action plans, at different types of institutions.
- How the institutions manage resources allocated to the work on gender equality and diversity.
- The challenges in the work on ethnic diversity, particularly those encountered by different ethnically diverse groups, such as immigrants, descendants of immigrants and internationally mobile researchers.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work on gender equality and diversity at the different institutions.





## HOW THE WORK ON GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IS ORGANISED

### Summary of the findings:

- The institutions in the sample allocate relatively few resources to gender equality and diversity, but this varies according to the type and size of the institution.
- 80 per cent of the universities, 76.5 per cent of the university colleges and 38.9 per cent of the research institutes have a general action plan for gender equality and diversity.
- All the action plans include gender as a protected characteristic. Disability, ethnicity and sexual harassment are also included in many of the plans.
- About half of the institutions (51.1 per cent) have a coordination group or a committee for gender equality and diversity.
- Many of the institutions that have a committee or a coordination group also have a general action plan.
- The institutions place little emphasis on gender equality and diversity in manager recruitment and in management development.
- The respondents called for a higher level of competence in gender equality and diversity in relation to manager recruitment and management development.
- More than half (57.7 per cent) of the institutions in the sample raised the issue of gender equality and/or diversity at board meetings in the period between the summer of 2019 and the summer of 2020.

## Variations in how the institutions organise the work on gender equality and diversity

The resource allocation in the institutions in relation to the work on gender equality and diversity varies depending on the type and size of the institution. According to the survey, half of the institutions spend less than NOK 200,000 a year on this work. More than half do not include work on gender equality and diversity in any job descriptions, and less than half have dedicated more than 25 per cent of a full-time position to the work.

The largest institutions – the universities – use the most resources; the majority allocate more than NOK 2 million to gender equality and diversity work. Many of the universities also have a dedicated committee or coordination group for the work, action plans both at a general and local level, and action plans that include more protected characteristics than the other types of institutions.

In addition to the variation in their size, organisation, budgets and duties, the institutions are subject to different requirements and expectations. It was not therefore relevant to compare their work in this report, and a distinction had to be made between the different types of institutions in the analysis.

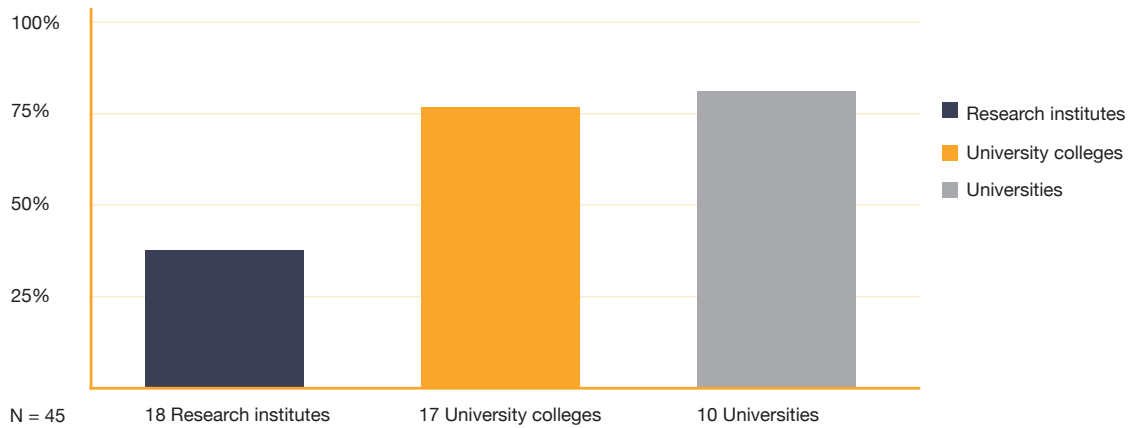
We have chosen to take a closer look at three instruments used by most of the institutions to organise the work on gender equality and diversity:

- Action plans
- Committees and coordination groups
- Manager competence



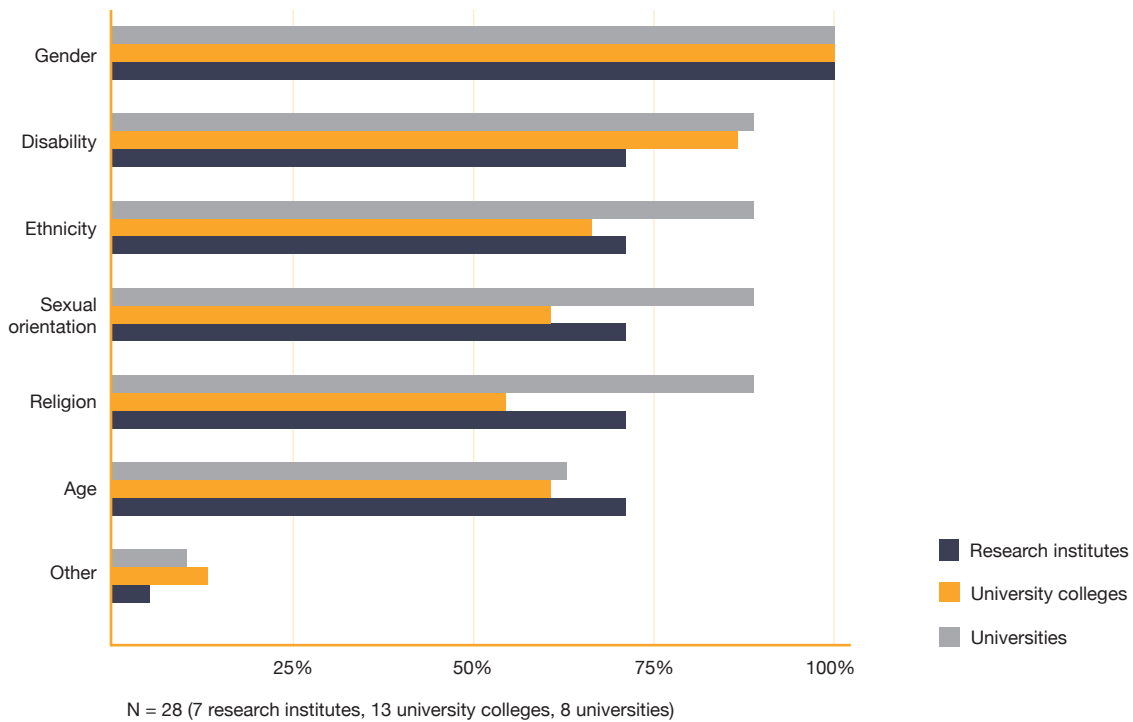
**Action plans:** More than half of the institutions have implemented an action plan centrally, and most of these institutions have based the plan on an earlier evaluation.

**Figure 1: The percentage of institutions with a general action plan**



The universities' action plans include more protected characteristics than the other institutions.

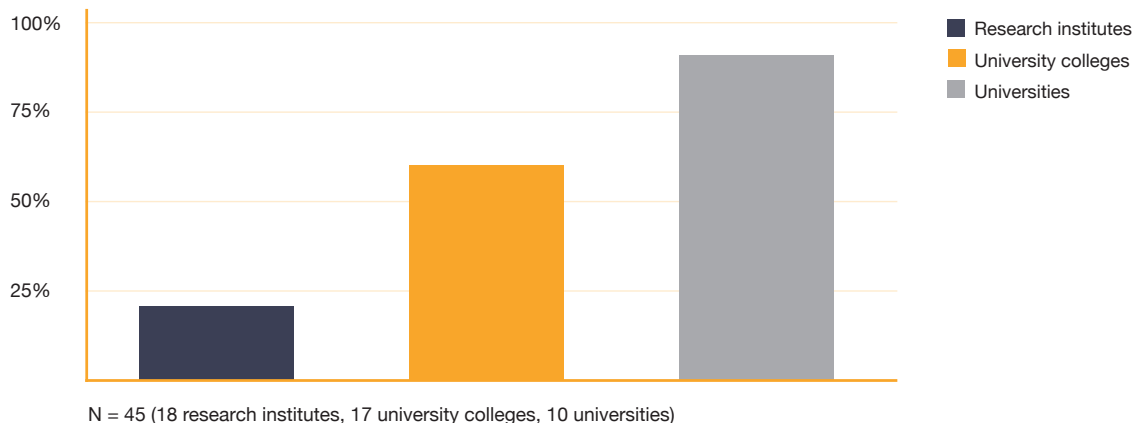
**Figure 3: Protected characteristics included in the action plans at the various institutions**



Most universities also have local action plans at faculty and department level, and it can be assumed that smaller institutions do not need local action plans.

**Committees and coordination groups:** Around half of the institutions have a committee or coordination group for the work on gender equality and diversity, but this varies considerably across the different types of institutions. Ninety per cent of the universities have a committee or coordination group, compared to 22 per cent of the research institutes.

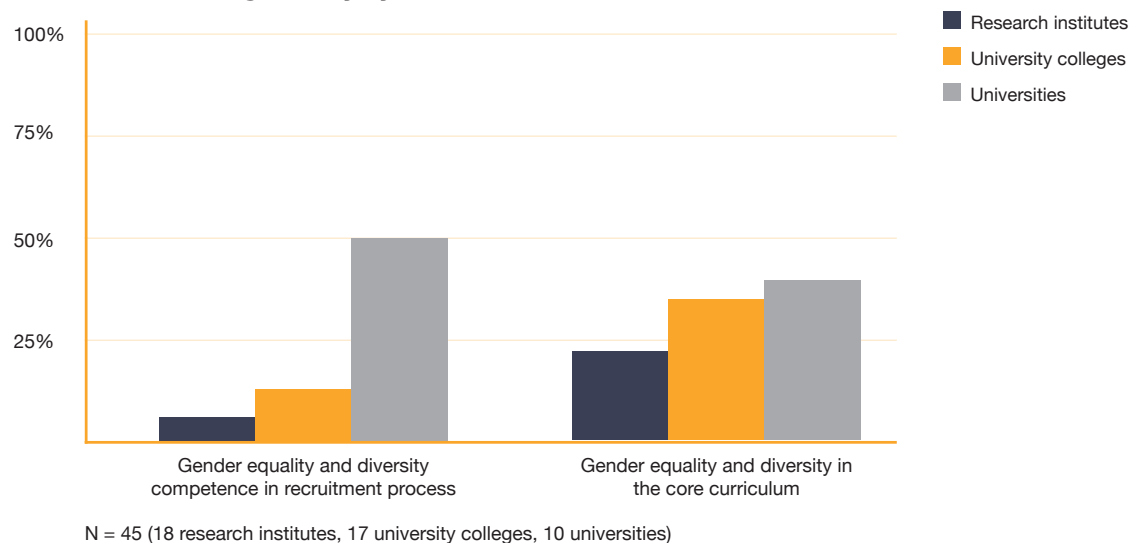
**Figure 5: Percentage of institutions with a committee or coordination group for gender equality and diversity**



We also looked at the association between action plans and committees or coordination groups and found that two-thirds of the institutions that have an action plan also have a committee or a coordination group. Three-quarters of those with a committee or coordination group also have a general action plan. Just as many of the committees and coordination groups are headed by rectors or directors as by HR staff.

**Manager competence:** Many of the institutions in the sample place little emphasis on competence in gender equality and diversity in recruitment processes, but half of the universities report having a focus on this. A third of the institutions include gender equality and diversity in the core curriculum for management development measures or training, and the responses were more evenly distributed between the institutions on this issue.

**Figure 9: Requirements for gender equality and diversity competence among managers, by type of institution**



More than half of the institutions have discussed gender equality and diversity at board meetings in the past year, and several of the respondents would like to see a stronger focus on these issues.



## INSTITUTIONS' EVALUATION OF THEIR OWN GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY WORK

### Summary of the findings:

- More than half of the respondents rated their efforts in gender equality and in combatting sexual harassment at their own institution as 'good'.
- None of the respondents from the universities rated their efforts in ethnic diversity as 'good'.
- Institutions that did not have an action plan were more likely to rate their efforts in ethnic diversity as 'good' than institutions that did have an action plan.

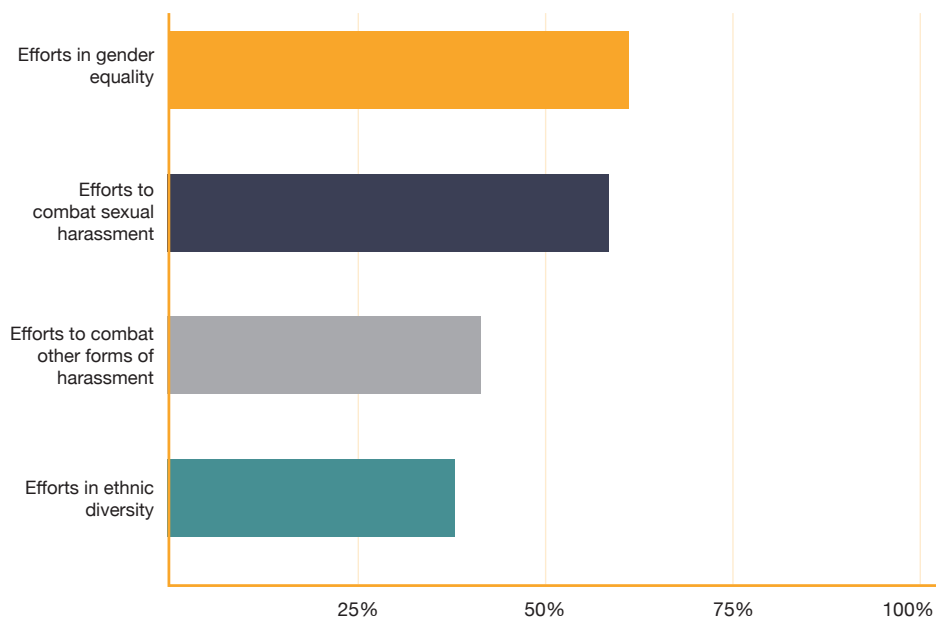
### The institutions rated their own efforts in gender equality and in combatting sexual harassment as good, but as poorer for ethnic diversity

On a scale of 'poor', 'average' or 'good', more than half of the institutions rated their efforts in gender equality and in combatting sexual harassment as 'good'. However, less than half responded 'good' in answer to the question on efforts in other types of harassment and ethnic diversity. One explanation for this may be that the sector has a longer history of working with challenges related to gender equality than ethnic diversity.



**Figure 11: Percentage of respondents who rated their efforts in various aspects of gender equality and diversity as 'good'**

(N=48)



The analysis also shows that the universities – which reported using the most resources on gender equality and diversity – rarely rated their efforts as 'good'. However, it is unclear what the respondents consider to be 'good', as no definition was given in the survey.

One of the respondents also pointed out that it can be difficult to measure the progress in the efforts aimed at ethnic diversity.





# IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE EFFORTS IN GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

## Summary of the findings:

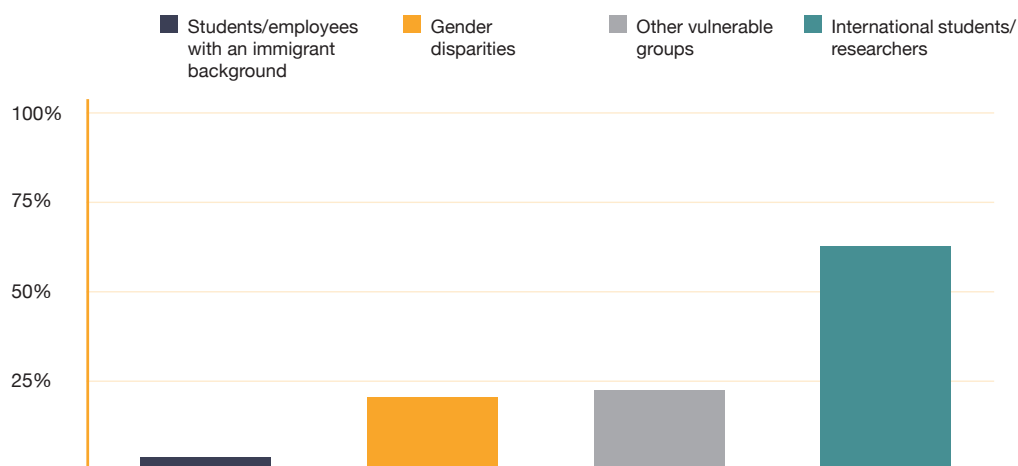
- Approximately one third (30.6 per cent) of the institutions have introduced new measures aimed at gender equality and diversity in connection with the pandemic.
- More than one third (36.7 per cent) reported that gender equality and diversity have been discussed during the pandemic.
- The majority described international students and researchers as particularly vulnerable groups during the pandemic. The respondents are also concerned about how the pandemic is impacting on women's working conditions.

## The institutions report few hold-ups in the work during the pandemic

According to the respondents, the COVID-19 pandemic has had little impact on their efforts in gender equality and diversity. Only 10 per cent had experienced disruptions to their work. About 30 per cent had introduced new measures in gender equality and diversity, and had discussed these issues in connection with the pandemic.

More than half pointed to challenges for international students and researchers, and several of the institutions also referred to challenges for other vulnerable groups and the risk of the pandemic widening the gender gap.

**Figure 15: Topics most often included in the institutions' risk assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic. Percentage of respondents who selected every topic. (N=36)**



It is worth noting here that the survey was distributed at the start of the pandemic and that the responses may have been different if it had been conducted at a later date.

### **CONSIDERATIONS WHEN READING AND USING THE REPORT**

*When reading the report, it is important to be aware of the fundamental differences between universities, university colleges and research institutes that we have discussed previously. It is also important to note that not all institutions were invited to participate in the survey on which the report is based. The survey was sent to all universities and university colleges, but only a selection of research institutes.*

*Not all institutions responded to the survey. Seventy-five per cent of the 64 institutions that were invited to take part responded. Universities had the highest response rate (100 per cent), and research institutes had the lowest (58 per cent). Our basis for analysing the work of research institutes is therefore weaker than for university colleges and universities.*

*We would also like to point out that the survey was sent to the HR managers at the institutions, and that only one person at each institution responded to the survey. In some cases, respondents were unable to elaborate on their answers, which limits the conclusions that can be drawn. We have pointed this out at several places in the report.*

*The responses to the survey were anonymous. We do not therefore know which responses are from which institution. Consequently, it has not been possible to obtain information from other sources about, for example, the number of women in senior management or the gender balance and diversity among staff across disciplines in the institutions.*



Committee for Gender Balance  
and Diversity in Research

**kifinfo<sup>1</sup>**

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[Kifinfo.no/fravisjontilpraksis](http://Kifinfo.no/fravisjontilpraksis)**

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