

USING RESTRUCTURING TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- A GUIDE FOR THE RESEARCH SECTOR



Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research

THE KIF COMMITTEE

The Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (KIF) was first established in 2004. The Committee is now in its fourth period.

The Committee supports and gives recommendations regarding measures that promote the integration of gender balance and diversity activities at universities, university colleges and research institutes, thus helping to increase diversity among the staff and in research. The Committee seeks to raise the overall level of awareness of problems related to diversity and inclusion in the research system. Its most important task is to address issues of gender and ethnicity. Its activities encompass diversity perspectives, including gender perspectives, in research.

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Photo: Ingrid S. Torp

Restructuring: an opportunity to enhance gender equality and diversity

Restructuring has become part of everyday life at academic institutions as a result of mergers, relocation and establishment of new organizational units. Thanks to many years of work, we know a great deal about what hinders and what promotes career development for men and women in academic organizations. During restructuring, when decisions and changes are made quickly, there is a risk that gender equality and diversity efforts will be put on hold. At the same time, restructuring also offers an opportunity to make improvements in areas with particular challenges and to build structures and cultures at higher education institutions that promote gender balance and diversity. In June 2016, the KIF Committee brought this topic to the table at the conference *Structural reform in the higher education sector: Promising for equality?*, in cooperation with the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

Institutions that offer researchers good career opportunities, regardless of gender and background, can enhance

the relevance and quality of the research carried out there.

This may also have an impact on an institution's reputation and recruitment. A restructuring process must be viewed as an opportunity for an institution to implement positive change. The aim is to build institutions that are equipped to satisfy the future demand for innovative, relevant and high-quality education and research. Achieving this will require a diverse group of the best women and men.

The KIF Committee is issuing this guide to help the sector place gender equality and diversity high on the agenda in restructuring processes, regardless of whether they are small-scale or wide-reaching. We know that restructuring processes are hectic and often fast paced. The window of opportunity is small, and we must make sure we use it.

Curt Rice
Chair of the KIF Committee

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10 tips for the restructuring phase

1. Use restructuring processes as an opportunity to prepare a sound action plan for gender equality and diversity.
2. Take advantage of the restructuring process to design an effective structure for equality efforts that are supported at the departmental and institutional level as well as by top-level management.
3. Conduct a gender analysis of the organization: Obtain a thorough overview and good statistics so you see which gender structures are in play and you have a solid basis for launching gender equality measures that have the intended effect.
4. Prepare a few action points for gender equality during the restructuring process – or a checklist for the individual managers adapted to your institution.
5. Give one or more people in the organization a clear mandate to work with gender equality and diversity during the restructuring process.
6. Use the recruitment of new managers as an opportunity to ensure there is good gender balance and greater diversity in the management. Require new managers to have competency in and experience with gender equality and diversity efforts.
7. Involve the board, as they can make it a requirement that gender equality work is given high priority during the restructuring process.
8. Top-level management must ensure that mid-level managers use appraisal interviews and development discussions during the restructuring period as well. These discussions are an excellent tool for career planning, and managers with an awareness of gender equality issues can use this tool to improve the gender balance in senior-level positions.
9. Norwegian trade associations have drawn up agreements that can be used to put gender equality and diversity on the agenda. The *Basic Agreement for the Civil Service* and the templates for adjustment agreements and restructuring agreements are important tools in this regard.
10. Include gender and diversity perspectives in evaluations of the restructuring process.



Gender equality and diversity must be a natural part of restructuring processes

Mergers, relocation, reorganization and new reforms – institutions in the research sector are constantly subject to change. This may take the form of large-scale restructuring with wide-ranging consequences or smaller-scale restructuring with minor adjustments to the organizational chart. What is certain is that the sector will continue to undergo restructuring, and the restructuring process offers institutions a unique opportunity for improvement.

Many years of research have given us good insight into the challenges met by universities, university colleges and research institutes in their efforts to achieve gender balance. The restructuring process provides an excellent opportunity to tackle these challenges, assemble a staff that better reflects the population at large, and create a structure and culture that promotes both gender equality and diversity. We are aware, however, that such processes involve intense time and work pressure, and that gender equality and diversity considerations must often yield to other pressing matters. If this occurs, we run the risk of reinforcing and prolonging an unfavourable situation for decades to come.

This guide is meant to serve as a manual and tool for managers, human resources staff, gender equality advisers, employee representatives and other interested parties who want to ensure that gender balance and ethnic diversity work continues unimpeded during a restructuring process. The guide also discusses how restructuring can create a window of opportunity for institutions to improve the conditions for achieving gender balance and diversity. Primary focus is placed on gender balance, in part because this is where there is currently the most knowledge. Nevertheless, much of what applies to gender and gender equality is also relevant for activities to increase diversity. Although this guide addresses specifically ethnic diversity, institutions must work towards diversity in the broadest sense of the term.

What is restructuring?

The term “restructuring” is used in many contexts and has many meanings, but it is generally associated with various types of organizational change. For instance, restructuring may involve merging two or more institutions, splitting up institutions, reassigning tasks from one institution to another, reorganizing tasks within a single institution or geographical relocation.

Restructuring processes usually result in structural and cultural changes. Similarly, the research sector faces both structural and cultural equality challenges. This chapter provides a brief introduction to the significance of structure and culture in organizations for gender equality and diversity activities.

Challenges in the research sector

The research sector is facing major challenges related to both gender balance and diversity, and the picture is a complicated one. The higher up in the hierarchy one goes, the fewer women are to be found. The percentage of female professors is currently 27 per cent. It was 18 per cent in 2007. The gender balance varies from subject field to subject field. The highest percentage of women is found in the health sciences and medicine, while the lowest percentage is found in mathematics, natural science and technology disciplines.

It is difficult for foreign researchers, particularly for non-white researchers, to make a career for themselves in Norwegian academia. The number of professors in Norway increased from nearly 3 000 in 2007 to nearly 4 000 in 2014. During the same period, the percentage of professors from EU/EFTA countries, North America, Australia and New Zealand increased from 17 to 19 per cent. The percentage of professors from Asia, Africa and Latin America increased from 3 to 4 per cent.



Only one of four professors is a woman – and in the technology disciplines only one of 10 – despite the fact that women make up 53 per cent of the individuals who have completed doctoral degrees. At the universities, 34 per cent of the department heads are women, while at the university colleges this percentage is 49 per cent.

Organizational structure

The organizational structure is the formally approved distribution of tasks within an organization. It includes grouping tasks into various organizational units to facilitate coordination between tasks and systems for the management, coordination and quality assurance of the work carried out. The organizational structure also encompasses the distribution of authority: who is to be given the authority to determine which tasks need to be done.

Looking through the lens of gender, several clear gender structures emerge. These occur along three different dimensions:

1. The percentage of women and men in the institution.
2. The concentration of men and women in different types of positions and academic fields. Over time this division is often perceived to be very natural, for instance in certain jobs being considered typical men's or women's work.
3. Hierarchical distribution, the degree of both formal and informal influence. Men traditionally sit at the top of the hierarchy and therefore occupy more powerful positions than women.

It is also important to include this kind of structural thinking in activities to increase diversity, as the term "diversity" often becomes ambiguous. From the perspective of power, it is necessary to view diversity along these same three dimensions.

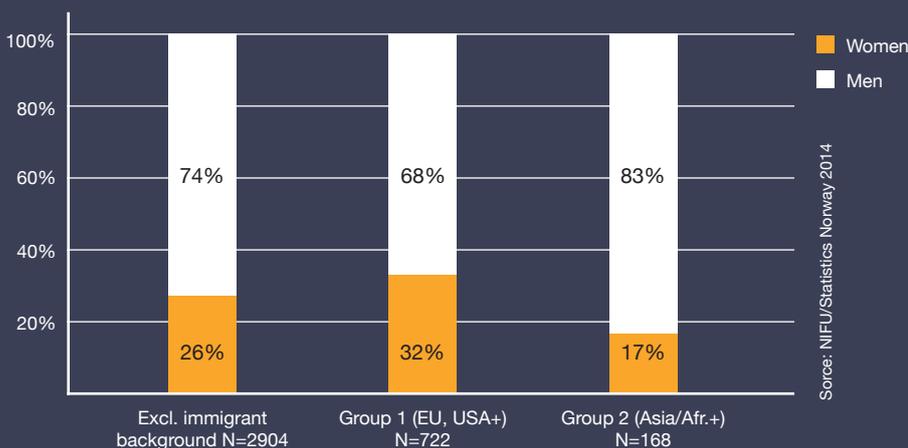
"Some think that gender equality efforts involve finding the guilty party and that men are scapegoated. But that's not what it's about. It has to do with structures and whether we choose to continue the structures or challenge them. It's not gender equality that is the problem, it's gender inequality"

Anna Wahl, Professor at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology

The choices made during restructuring affect gender diversity:

- Changes in the organizational chart and geographical structure pose challenges to gender equality activities. How can these be supported throughout the entire organization, both centrally and locally?
- Recruitment to new management positions can be used to improve gender balance and diversity in the scientific and administrative leadership.
- The scientific profile chosen by the institution determines which subject fields will be given priority and funding. When certain fields are strongly dominated by one gender, this has consequences for gender equality.
- There are more women than men on the teaching track in academia. It is important to ensure that the staff members in this group – and not only those on the research track – can develop their careers and secure a professorship.
- The institution's new personnel policy must include recruitment and career-building strategies that safeguard gender equality and diversity, such as position classification plans and mentoring programmes.

Professors, by gender and background



The percentage of women is highest among professors from EU/EFTA countries, North America, Australia and New Zealand (Group 1). The percentage of women is lowest among professors from Asia, Africa and Latin America (Group 2).



Photo: iStockphoto

Organizational culture

Restructuring processes provide an opportunity to change some of the structural conditions that perpetuate inequality by improving gender balance and recruiting more women to management positions. Restructuring processes can also be used to shape the organizational culture by introducing routines and practices that counteract discrimination and increase the chances that all individuals will be judged equally and have equally good career opportunities regardless of their gender and background.

Research on leadership and women has identified predominant perceptions about gender. What is considered proper behaviour, language and expertise for a man may not be the same as for a woman – we are judged differently. This is often called “implicit bias”, i.e. unconscious bias in judgement and/or behaviour. Research on recruitment processes and allocation of research funding shows that men are judged on what they can potentially perform, while women are judged on what they have achieved. Men who have chosen a single specialist area may be lauded as deep thinkers, while women with a similarly targeted focus are criticized for having a narrow focus. Alternatively, men with a broad focus are perceived to have a wide range of knowledge, while women with the same orientation may be seen as superficial. It is important to examine how expertise, scientific quality, excellence and potential are understood and who has the power to define these terms.

“When we don’t bring an awareness of gender into restructuring processes, there is a great danger that old patterns will be maintained and reinforced.”

*Berit Gullikstad, Associate Professor
at NTNU in Trondheim*

What is organizational culture – and what role does it play?

- **Hero status:** Are the organization’s heroes men or women? What gives status within the organization?
- **Rules of the game:** Who speaks at meetings? Is there a fixed order in which people speak? Gender hierarchies often become visible in this context.
- **Humour:** What do colleagues laugh about among themselves? What happens if someone does not laugh at a sexist or racist joke? Harassment is often cloaked in humour.
- **Language:** How do colleagues at the institution communicate among themselves? Has a tribal language evolved? Language is a particular challenge from a diversity perspective.
- **Attire:** Are there different expectations about how women and men should dress in the organization?
- **Room/furnishings/pictures:** Who feels at home? Who are the heroes whose portraits are hanging on the walls and who have buildings named after them?



Photo: iStockphoto

The research sector would ideally like to be a place where hard work is rewarded with success. However, research on the sector shows that informal networks and relations over time are one of the decisive factors in determining who will have a successful researcher career. For example, good networks open up greater opportunities for co-authoring, and success is measured partly by publication volume. Research reveals that men more often than women get a free ride when it comes to others' research. There is much that indicates that women and minorities are often at the back of the queue when it comes to filling important positions, allocating research funding and establishing scientific cooperation.

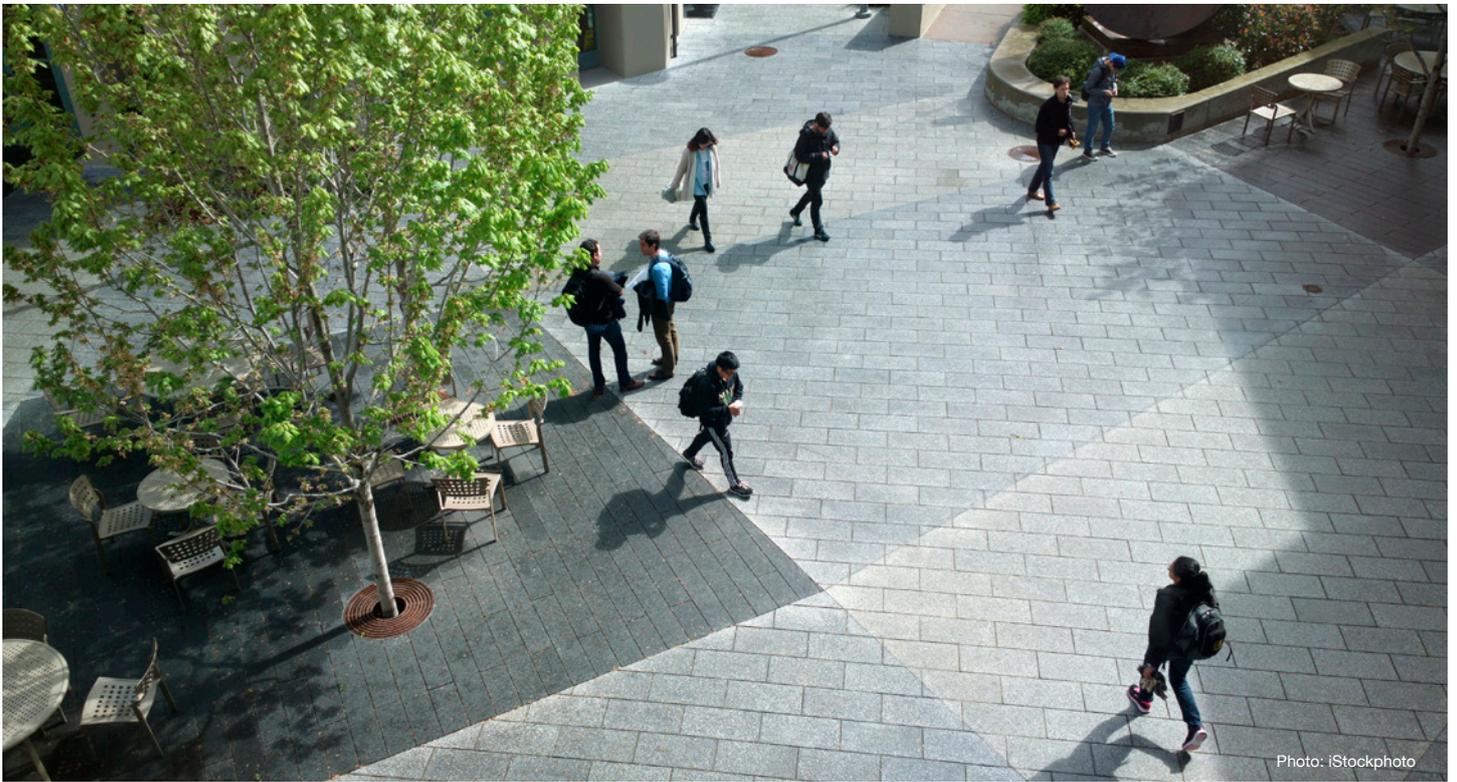
Inclusion and exclusion of academic staff in the workplace are subtle processes. They involve a sense of fitting in, of having a role, of being heard and of receiving recognition. Employees may not feel included in their workplace, even though this cannot be directly called discrimination. In his doctoral dissertation on gender equality in academia in the Nordic countries, Mathias Wullum Nielsen points out that women feel less appreciated, less included and a little more alone than their male colleagues. The KIF report on diversity shows that these same problems also apply to academics who come from other countries.

“The institution’s board also has power. It can decide to include gender equality among the areas to be prioritized in restructuring processes.”

*Jorun M. Ulvestad, Associate Professor
at the University College of Southeast
Norway*

es gender play?

- **Unconscious, subtle discrimination (microaggression):** Stereotypes about gender, ethnicity, sexuality and the like can contribute to a biased organizational culture.
- **Men often choose men (homosociality):** Important relationships are built over time that exclude women from male circles. These may include the relationship between doctoral student and supervisor, as well as other collegial networks. In this manner male colleagues help each other to advance.
- **Women also often choose men (heterosociality):** In institutions where women are a small minority, women may actually avoid actively working to improve gender equality or acknowledging discrimination because they do not want to be labelled as biased by their colleagues. It is important to obtain a critical mass of women to counteract this effect.



Challenges and opportunities during restructuring

When an institution undergoes restructuring, there will be ramifications for its gender equality and diversity efforts. The changes can present new challenges, as well as new opportunities to build a better organization.

A restructuring process involves intense pressure, in terms of both time and workload. Many decisions must be taken quickly, and there is little time for drawn-out processes. KIF's experience with restructuring in the research sector is that:

The time pressure is enormous

Managers have limited time and many tasks to accomplish. Due to the time pressure, it may not be possible to conduct thorough search processes to find good candidates to fill positions, which is an important tool in gender equality efforts. Routines that promote inclusion may also be given lower priority – such as translation of information to English for those who do not read Norwegian. This makes it difficult for international employees to stay informed about the restructuring process.

Gender equality efforts are put on hold

Gender equality committees and plans are curtailed. The management often forgets to assign someone responsibility for monitoring the restructuring process from a gender equality perspective.

“Right now, when so much is in flux, it is essential not to ignore gender equality efforts or put them on hold. This is not something we can think about later. Right now is when there are new management positions being filled, new collaborations being introduced, and many opportunities opening up.”

Bjørn Haugstad, State Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Research



Photo: iStockphoto

The choices made during large-scale restructuring have ramifications far into the future

Mass recruitment to management positions offers a unique opportunity to improve gender balance and diversity in a relatively short period of time. Choices related to academic profile and organization, career policy and organizational culture affect the situation in a more long-term perspective. In a Swedish report, Charlotta Krafft uses the term “distribution power” about the power inherent in the innumerable decisions – large and small, formal and informal – that affect working conditions for employees and their career and development opportunities. And precisely because managers have distribution power, it is critical that the managers who want to ensure equal career development conditions for their entire staff are knowledgeable about and have an awareness of gender and gender equality issues.

We not only restructure institutions, we reorganize the people in them

People are different when it comes to gender, language, background, level of functionality, family situation and obligations. It is wise to keep this in mind when the institution creates handbooks and agreements for use in a restructuring process. Handbooks and agreements for restructuring can be useful tools, but then they must focus specifically on gender balance, gender equality and diversity. Managers as well as employee representatives should keep this in mind.

“When you’re working to ensure effective mergers, the gender equality perspective can easily fade from view.”

*Petter Aaslestad,
Head of the Norwegian Association of Researchers*

Useful tools from Norwegian trade associations

An important tool is the *Basic Agreement for the Civil Service*. Section 21 of this agreement, entitled Gender Equality, addresses the employer’s responsibility and what must be included in the adjustment agreement to the Basic Agreement.

The *institutional adjustment agreement* is required to contain provisions on gender equality. The provisions must include competence-building measures, such as measures to ensure that women are assigned tasks of a competence-building nature on equal footing with men, especially with regard to management responsibilities. The provisions must also set out measures to ensure that gender-neutral criteria are used when setting salary levels and that this is practiced in a way that promotes gender equality. In addition, the adjustment agreement must contain detailed provisions on positive preferential treatment (with regard to job announcements and parameters for gender quotas).

Another important tool is the *restructuring agreement*, which elaborates on the rights and obligations of the employer, employee representatives and individual employees during restructuring. The template for the restructuring agreement in the central government administration does not contain provisions on gender equality and diversity, but these issues may be incorporated into the agreement if desired.

A third tool is that an institution undergoing restructuring may establish provisions on gender equality in its new personnel regulations. The parties may negotiate this in accordance with the *Civil Servants Act*.

Tips for successfully integrating equality efforts

- Perform a gender analysis of the institution, such as a *gender audit*, and actively use the results in gender equality efforts. Look for salary differences. Prepare an action plan.
- Organize the gender equality efforts in a way that ensures they are closely tied to the top-level management and based in the local units.
- Set institutional targets for gender equality and diversity in the restructuring process, such as hiring 50 per cent men and women for management positions.
- Can ongoing gender equality projects be used in the restructuring process? Take steps to ensure that gender equality projects are part of a targeted gender equality policy for the entire institution, and do not become isolated projects.
- Create a framework that allows employees to combine a new, longer commute with their family obligations and private life. One example of this is parents of small children who must be picked up from pre-school.

Good example of how to take advantage of ongoing projects in a restructuring phase

The Norwegian Marine Technology Research Institute (MARINTEK), one of the research institutes within SINTEF, carried out a major reorganization at the same time that SINTEF was implementing a gender equality project, which was funded by the BALANSE programme at the Research Council of Norway. The programme provides funding for projects designed to improve the gender balance in senior-level academic positions and research management. MARINTEK's participation in the BALANSE project increased the management's ability to recognize and draw on talented female candidates within the organization, and encouraged these women to raise their level of ambition and increase their desire to assume leadership positions. As a result of the reorganization, MARINTEK shifted from a structure comprised of numerous research divisions, all headed by men, to a new structure with three research divisions. A woman was chosen as the director of the largest division.

A structure and culture that advances gender equality and diversity

Larger institutions entail more complex organizational structures

- How does this affect the institutions? Will they become more autonomous? Less transparent?
- Will large research groups gain more autonomy in decisions regarding recruitment, academic profile and funding?
- What will be the impact on gender balance and diversity?

We know that traditional power structures and cultural ideas about gender and ethnicity have a tendency to reproduce themselves if we do not work systematically to challenge them. This is why it is important to prepare new action plans and assign someone specific responsibility to safeguard and implement gender equality and diversity efforts also during a restructuring process. These efforts must take into account the increased complexity of the institution, including with regard to geography.

When institutions are merged, a new geographic structure is created. This has implications for how gender equality efforts are organized. How can we make our work to improve gender balance a matter of equal concern for all the units in the new institution? And at what level will gender balance be assessed – at the institutional level, the departmental level, centrally, locally? The new institution must have a common policy, but with measures adapted to the various campuses. It is crucial that those who decide on the new structure also design an effective structure for gender equality efforts.

“As of today, neither the administrative organization nor the departmental organization at NTNU in Ålesund is in place, and this creates a lot of uncertainty and chaos. Put simply, the amount of challenges and information is so overwhelming that gender equality efforts are forgotten.”

Sahar S. Olsen, Assistant Professor at NTNU in Ålesund

into a large, complex institution

- Require job announcements to state that managers must have competency in and experience with gender equality and diversity efforts, and ask candidates about this during interviews.
- Ensure that employees who are involved in gender equality activities and serve in various related capacities receive adequate credit for their work.
- Seek information about gender equality efforts in appraisal interviews and development discussions, and ask what the employee has done to advance gender balance and diversity. If employees know that their supervisor will ask about this, they will more easily remember to keep gender equality in mind in their daily activities.
- Gender and diversity perspectives must be included in evaluations of the restructuring process.

The geographical structure affects the daily work life of employees. When the new institution has local campuses located far from each other, employees may have to commute more, especially between campuses, to perform their jobs. How does this affect career opportunities in a gender equality perspective? Research shows that women in particular choose jobs with a short commute and that they are more likely to adapt their commute to ensure their family life functions smoothly.

- How are gender equality efforts organized in the new institution?
- Will there be a gender equality adviser at each academic department? Or on each campus?
- How can cooperation and proximity to top-level management be ensured?

Gender-equal management

Restructuring involves creating a new management structure. It is also a time of mass recruitment in order to fill all the new management positions, which is different from the institutions' normal process of recruiting for one position at a time. Quite simply, restructuring offers a unique opportunity to shuffle the management deck and deal a new hand of cards.

It is important to view the gender distribution of all management positions as a whole, with regard to both academic and administrative positions. How is power distributed? How can an unfavourable concentration of power be avoided?

Top-level managers should set concrete goals and requirements for the recruitment process regarding both the percentage of women and men and the percentage of employees with a non-Norwegian background. They should look at which positions should be filled by whom, and set requirements for the make-up of management groups. This is a golden opportunity to create a heterogeneous, gender-equal management structure.

“The structural changes we are undergoing right now require management groups comprised of both genders and a variety of ethnicities, ages and backgrounds.”

Gunnar Bovim, Rector of NTNU

Good example of management recruitment

The job announcement for pro-rector of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in 2016 included the following requirement: “NTNU makes a conscious effort to enhance gender equality and emphasizes gender balance in its management groups. When recruiting candidates for management positions, special importance is attached to the candidate’s knowledge about and results from proactive gender equality efforts.”

Useful tool

Guidelines for gender mainstreaming in academia, a guide from the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research.



Gender-equal career paths in the new institution

The new institution must make choices regarding its academic profile and organization. Who gets to decide what the institution's academic profile will be? What subject areas will be prioritized? Who receives funding? This has ramifications when some subject areas are highly male dominated (mathematics, natural science and technology subjects), while others are dominated by women (health sciences and medicine). At the same time, the extent of ethnic diversity varies among subject areas. Research shows that the majority of foreign-born academic employees in Norway work in the fields of mathematics, natural science and technology. The smallest percentage of foreign-born employees is found in the social sciences. Restructuring can also be used to create more interaction and cooperation across traditional dividing lines.

Another issue is what level of importance will be attached to research and teaching in the new institution. This has consequences for the duties that are assigned to the academic positions and for the employees' career path. Today there are far more women

"Why can't the rector say: 'I want to have 30 men and 30 women, and I will focus on group excellence'? Research shows that heterogeneous groups are better."

Curt Rice, Chair of the KIF Committee and Rector of Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences

Using restructuring to improve procedures to ensure that employees in all phases of life can combine work and family life:

- Allow all sick-child days to be deducted from the fellowship period for doctoral fellows with small children.
- Introduce a re-launch grant that gives extra time for research for all temporary academic employees who have taken parental leave or who have been absent from work for an extended period of time for other reasons, such as illness.
- Ensure that the increasing requirement for international mobility is adapted for researchers with family obligations and children.
- Use restructuring as a chance to reduce – not increase – the use of temporary positions. An unpredictable job situation and income cause hardship, especially for people who are just starting to get established.

Some steps to ensure better gender balance and diversity in recruitment processes

- Begin the recruitment process before job vacancies are announced.
- Have public, wide-reaching job announcements that encourage women and ethnic minorities to apply. The percentage of women hired increases when the announcement is public rather than internal.
- Use search committees to find more relevant candidates outside of one's own circle of acquaintances and networks.
- Use international recruitment to find strong female candidates in subjects with poor gender balance.
- Make a conscious attempt to assemble good teams – think not only about the individuals, but about the group as a whole and group excellence.
- Think *dual careers* in recruitment and take into account that today's researchers are often part of two-career families.
- Promote Norwegian parental rights in international recruitment.
- Be aware of research that shows the tendency to assess men as better qualified than women – even though they have identical experience. Establish routines to create awareness about *implicit bias* and counteract this in evaluation committees.
- Do not allow personal suitability to become a subjective assessment in the recruitment process. Decide how you will define personal suitability before the recruitment process begins, and use this definition when assessing personal suitability.

on the teaching track, and the transition schemes between the teaching track and research track were discontinued in 2015. Although the research track is given priority, it is important to ensure that the teaching track does not become a professional dead end.

A restructuring process is an opportunity to establish practices and routines to counteract the mechanisms that foster inequality. This means creating fairer recruitment processes and equal opportunities for career development, regardless of gender and ethnic background.

Research shows that men and women have different starting points for building their careers. The time use study conducted by the Work Research Institute in 2012 shows that the average work week in the sector is almost 48 hours and that research is seen as an activity carried out at home. Men work a little more than women, and at the same time it is men who mostly work beyond the normal work day. Women are more likely to work between 8 am and 4 pm – the hours when research activity must compete with teaching and administrative duties. It is therefore critical that managers ensure that employees have uninterrupted time for research-related activities without needing to work in the evenings or at night. Can restructuring be used to reorganize administrative resources and give academic employees more time for career-promoting tasks within the normal work day?

Another challenge is to create a framework that alleviates conflicts between career and family obligations. According to Wullum Nielsen, researchers who have left academia say that an uncertain job situation is one of the reasons for their decision to quit. This applies more to women than to men. It can be difficult to combine work and family life, especially with the increasing requirement for international mobility. Research also shows that researchers with children are at a disadvantage in the academic competition; this is also somewhat true for men.

“Who writes the job announcement and what are the ramifications of this? How do we avoid hiring a person who is a duplicate of the professor being replaced?”

Vidar L. Haanes, Chair of the Board of the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions and Rector of the Norwegian School of Theology

Useful tool

The *ERA Roadmap* (European Research Area) may be used as a tool. One of the priorities in the roadmap is an open labour market for researchers. This means that countries in the ERA are to have open processes for job announcements and position appointments, create structures to promote mobility and ensure attractive careers. The roadmap also prioritizes gender equality and integration of gender perspectives in research. Similarly, there is a European framework in the EU's *Charter and Code for Researchers* which puts efforts to improve gender balance and increase diversity on the agenda.

Useful exercise to generate discussion about gender equality in the organization

On a gender equality scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is a complete absence of gender equality and 10 is full gender equality, where does your institution fall? All the participants must think of a number first without saying it aloud. Then all the participants can reveal what they think. It can be shocking to discover that someone gave a score of 3 while some else in the same room gave a 9. Then the participants must explain why they landed on

the number they did. Then the following questions are asked: What have we done that is positive? Where do we go from here? It may also be interesting to see whether there are obvious gender differences regarding the numbers chosen and the arguments made.

Exercise developed by Anna Wahl, Professor at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Working environment and culture

Ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to pursue a research career entails creating workplaces with a good, inclusive working environment. It is important in a restructuring phase to focus on how to establishing frameworks that accommodate the fact that staffs are comprised of people of both genders, who come from different backgrounds and have various obligations outside of work.

When different types of workplaces are merged, different organizational cultures meet. The challenge is to coordinate these and create a new, common culture where everyone feels comfortable.

“I don't think that there are any single answers for change processes as such or a fixed model that all universities can follow to keep gender equality high on the agenda. We must simply ensure that we have the gender equality perspective in the back of our minds at all times, and have the discussions over time as they arise. This is precisely why it's so critical that managers are very aware of gender equality.”

Anna Wahl, Professor at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology

Good example of an inclusive working environment

Noragric, a department at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, has academic employees from around the world, including from countries in the South. Use of English has helped to create an inclusive organizational culture, in part for foreign Ph.D. students. Noragric's recruitment policy, language policy, organization of research groups and social events foster and maintain inclusion and diversity.

Some steps to create a good working environment

- It is critical to have a transparent, fair distribution of required duties and research funding from the institution. Avoid suspicion of favouritism.
- Create workplaces that are accepting of family and private life. Research shows that women leave working environments that give little consideration to the family lives of their employees.
- Inclusion and exclusion are processes that can be influenced. For example, try to establish some new research groups and researcher networks with both formal and informal gatherings across established relationships, gender, ethnicity, age, etc. This may be a way to break down traditional networks that often exclude women and researchers with a minority background.
- Prioritize prevention of harassment, and require the inclusion of questions about harassment in working life surveys. Harassment occurs covertly, and may be difficult to unmask in a competitive sector where it is important to rise above the competition.

Sources and further reading

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In addition, Kifinfo.no provides useful tips for measures and compiles Norwegian, European and international web resources for gender equality and diversity efforts in the research sector.

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