

Strategy for the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (the KIF Committee) 2022–2025

Introduction

The Ministry of Education and Research has given the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (the KIF Committee) the task of supporting and advising universities, university colleges and research institutes (the higher education and research sector) in their work on gender balance and diversity among staff. The Committee shall also help to raise awareness and increase knowledge about diversity, inclusion and harassment, and about how gender and social and ethnic background impact critical transitions in a research career. The Committee shall adopt an international perspective in its national work and be a driving force in the international efforts within the area covered by its mandate. The whole sector can seek advice from the Committee, and the Committee may itself initiate measures and assess their effects. Based on this mandate, the Committee shall endeavour to achieve a more intersectional/multi-dimensional focus by including gender, ethnic and social background in its work. Different dimensions of diversity can interact and influence each other in various ways. Research careers, diversity, inclusion and harassment will also be overarching elements in the Committee's work.

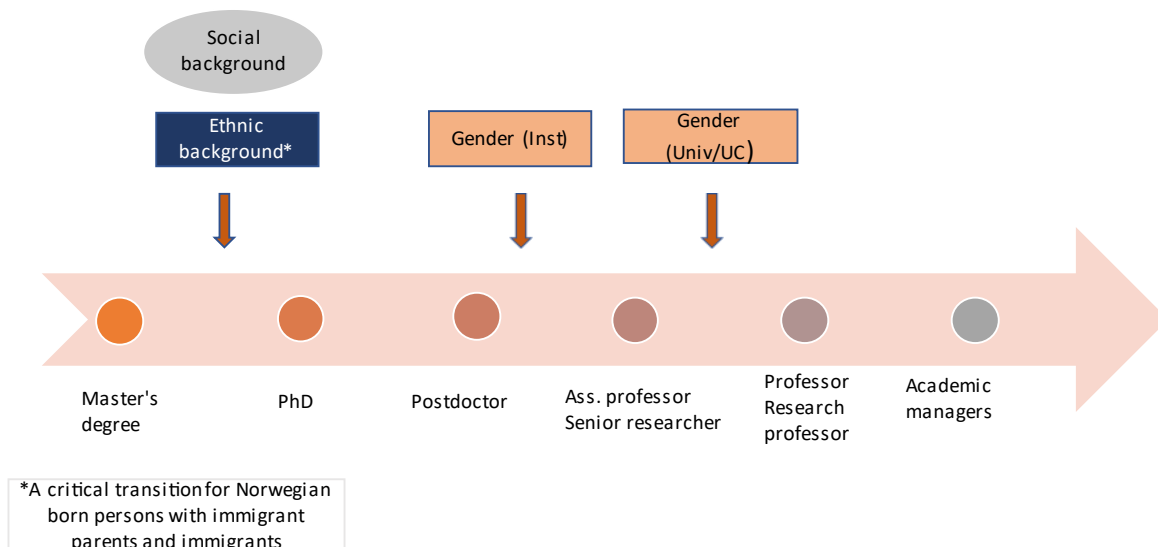
Achieving gender balance and diversity in research is a national objective based on several grounds. Firstly, it is justified on democratic grounds, and the principles of representation and fairness are important. There is also an intra-sector justification for gender balance and diversity. If research is to be relevant and of good quality, it must be able to identify new issues and new solutions. To identify new issues, we need different perspectives. Broad recruitment therefore raises the quality of research.

When examining the composition of employees in the higher education and research sector, we see big differences between the different stages of a research career. To begin with, there are more female than male students, and a majority of research fellows are also women. Moreover, if we look at all employees in teaching and researcher positions in the whole higher education and research sector, there are almost as many women as men. However, if we look at the top academic positions, the proportion of women decreases significantly.

We see the same pattern as regards ethnic diversity. Despite a strong increase in the number of students from immigrant backgrounds in recent years, there has only been a very small increase in the number who embark on a research career. There is great variation, however, between researchers who have immigrated to Norway after taking an education abroad, immigrants educated in Norway and Norwegian researchers with immigrant parents. It is the latter group in particular that is underrepresented in academic positions.

We can look at the different factors that, together, constitute diversity, and we will see that the composition of the group changes over the course of a career. We begin with a student group that is relatively broadly composed as regards gender, ethnic background, social background etc., but end up with a group of employees in top academic positions that has a relatively narrow composition – a group whose members strongly resemble each other.

Critical transitions in a research career



The figure shows that the sector loses a lot of its employee diversity on the way to the top academic positions at many of the critical transitions in a research career. If everyone is to have equal opportunities, there are two crucial factors: the need for broad recruitment and the need to retain those recruited, i.e. that the sector includes all employees in the academic community. The Committee will, in particular, endeavour to ensure that the institutions in the sector identify the phases in young academics' careers where many from the different groups disappear. The Committee will encourage the institutions in the sector to annually summarise their status as regards recruiting broadly and retaining a broadly composed group of employees. In its dialogue with the institutions, the Committee will raise the question of diversity management and take the initiative to ensure that courses/competence-raising measures for management include diversity management as a topic.

The KIF Committee can be both a driving force and an advisory body, but it is the institutions that have the means at their disposal to effect changes. The measures proposed in this strategy are limited by the instruments and resources the Committee has at its disposal. The Committee does not have formal authority to directly influence decisions taken by the institutions in our sector. The measures taken by the Committee will therefore primarily involve knowledge acquisition, awareness raising, advice, and the development of measures that the sector can make use of.

Gender

Goals: By the end of the period, more institutions shall have increased their gender balance (40–60%) in all categories of academic positions, also in fields where there is currently a gender imbalance. The sector shall have increased its awareness of inclusion and harassment and how this impacts career development.

In its work, the Committee will focus in particular on various academic groups or institutions where the gender balance in top academic positions is very skewed or where recruitment is very gender-imbalanced. The Committee will take part in the EU GENDERACTIONplus project and keep the sector up to date about European requirements for gender equality and inclusion.

The Committee shall:

- Help institutions to develop action plans for gender balance and diversity, and inform them about ways of enhancing the gender balance and increasing knowledge about their effects.
- Strengthen the sector's work on researcher assessments and career development in accordance with the Strategy for Researcher Recruitment and Career Development, and maintain a dialogue with Universities Norway (UHR), the Association of Norwegian Research Institutes (FFA) and the institutions about the importance of emphasising all relevant competences when recruiting to academic positions, including teaching and management duties.
- Raise the question of gender balance in connection with recruitment and in top academic positions during all visits to institutions.

Ethnicity

Goals: By the end of the period, more institutions shall have increased ethnic diversity in all categories of academic positions. The sector shall have increased its awareness of inclusion, discrimination and harassment and how this impacts career development in the higher education and research sector.

In its work, the Committee shall focus in particular on people who are Norwegian-born with immigrant parents and immigrants educated in Norway.

The Committee shall:

- Together with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Research Council of Norway and other actors, develop a better knowledge base about barriers to career development, experiences of exclusion/harassment and discrimination, and measures that can address such challenges.
- Disseminate knowledge about ethnic diversity in academia at seminars, workshops, meetings and on the website Kifinfo.no.
- Help institutions to devise targeted and adapted measures to increase ethnic diversity and improve recruitment and inclusion.
- Endeavour to ensure that surveys about harassment and local working environment surveys include questions about perceived ethnic discrimination.
- Strengthen the sector's work on researcher assessments and career development in accordance with the Strategy for Researcher Recruitment and Career Development, with a particular focus on the areas covered by the Committee's mandate.
- Raise the topic of recruitment of ethnic minorities during all visits to institutions.

Social background

Goals: The sector shall have increased its knowledge about and have greater awareness of social background as a barrier to recruitment and career development in academic positions.

In its work, the Committee shall have a particular focus on first-generation academics in recruitment positions.

The Committee shall:

- Together with the Ministry of Education and Research, the Research Council of Norway and other actors, develop a better knowledge base about barriers to career development, experiences of exclusion/harassment, and measures that can address such challenges.
- Disseminate knowledge about social background and first-generation academics at

seminars, workshops and on the website Kifinfo.no.

- Help institutions to devise targeted and adapted measures to recruit and include first-generation academics.
- Raise the topic of recruitment of first-generation academics during all visits to institutions.

Harassment and discrimination

Goals: The sector shall have a zero vision for sexual harassment and discrimination. The sector shall have increased its knowledge and awareness of how it can prevent sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and other grounds.

The sector shall have increased its knowledge about how harassment/discrimination impedes career development.

The Committee shall:

- Strengthen the knowledge base about harassment and discrimination in Norwegian academia by taking the initiative to map the situation during the period. Among other things, this will include taking the initiative for a new survey of harassment and discrimination in the sector that builds on the survey conducted in 2019.
- Disseminate tools for preventing the occurrence of harassment, and for managing it when it does occur.
- Raise the topic of how the institutions work on sexual harassment, racial harassment and discrimination on all grounds.
- Communicate the importance of good whistleblowing and case processing procedures.
- Disseminate information about harassment and discrimination on the website Kifinfo.no.
- Acquire and disseminate knowledge and recommendations from European work in this field.

Other grounds of discrimination

Goals: By the end of the period, the sector shall know more about other grounds of discrimination, such as disability, gender expression, sexual orientation, gender identity, language, and religion/beliefs.

All grounds of discrimination can constitute a barrier to recruitment, inclusion and career development. All these grounds can be combined with other identity markers.

The Committee shall:

- Encourage the Ministry of Education and Research and other relevant actors to actively acquire knowledge about all grounds of discrimination that are covered by the activity duty and duty to issue a statement set out in the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act.
- Take the initiative to ensure that surveys about harassment also include questions about perceived discrimination on grounds other than gender, ethnicity or social background.
- Disseminate knowledge from surveys concerning how institutions in the sector work to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion as regards gender, ethnicity and disability.