

Development plan for gender equality and diversity 2023–2025

Norwegian University of Science and Technology



Sulalit Bandyopadhyay's team who developed the Covid-19 test kit.
Photo: Geir Mogen

 NTNU

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Science and Technology



Main building at Gløshaugen in Trondheim.
Photo: Ole Sætermo

Development plan for gender equality and diversity 2023–2025

The aim of the development plan for gender equality and diversity is to contribute to equality and tolerance, fulfilment of our social mission, and further development of NTNU as a diverse university by creating inclusion and a sense of belonging for everyone. Both staff and students have a responsibility to create well-being and inclusion in their day-to-day activities at the university.

The development plan for gender equality and diversity aims to help realize values and development goals in line with NTNU's strategy "Knowledge for a better world". Work towards NTNU's social mission and core tasks is strengthened through an equitable, respectful and inclusive environment that recognizes diversity. NTNU's values – to be creative, critical, constructive and respectful – serve as a guide for all employees and students. Through commitment to these values, we promote gender equality and diversity at the university and enhance NTNU's quality as a place of study and a place of work.

The people in our organization are vital for fulfilling NTNU's social mission in education, research, innovation, dissemination and outreach. In NTNU's strategy, all the priority areas – "internationalization", "interdisciplinary collaboration", "career and skills", "work environment and student welfare", "campus development" and "NTNU's capacity for development" – are relevant for realizing the development plan. The guiding principles that are especially applicable to promoting gender equality and diversity are the strategy's development goals:

- Improve gender balance in top-level academic positions.
- Have an ambitious recruitment policy and effective procedures that ensure quality in hiring.

- Develop the leadership role and boost the skills of our managers and employees.
- Strengthen international recruitment of outstanding researchers and increase the international mobility of our employees.

Equality and diversity

“Equality” here refers to equal status, equal opportunities and equal rights. Accommodation and adaptation may often be necessary to prevent discrimination and to promote equality and inclusion. NTNU has traditionally had a focus on gender equality. As a result of internationalization, the inclusion of employees and students with an international background has become more important.

Statutory regulation of work with equality and diversity:

The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, the Act relating to Universities and University Colleges, and the Working Environment Act set requirements for NTNU’s work in promoting equal opportunity and preventing discrimination.

The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act defines equality as equal status, equal opportunities and equal rights. Accessibility and adaptations are prerequisites for equality. The Act requires NTNU to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote equality, prevent discrimination and promote inclusion. The goals of the development plan are intended to contribute to this, but they are not exhaustive because different units face different challenges. Local measures are necessary to deal with local challenges. All units at NTNU have an obligation to report on their status and work actively on gender equality and diversity.

Equality and diversity involve respecting and appreciating visible and invisible differences between people, such as gender, age, ethnicity, affiliation to a group, religion, functional diversity, life experiences, cultural background, sexual orientation, different insights, level of education, work experience, competence, interests, family situation, experience as a minority or belonging to an under-represented group in a community. It is important to take advantage of diversity as a resource in teaching, research and innovation.

Implementation of the development plan

The development plan for gender equality and diversity applies to all NTNU’s activities and to both staff and students. The plan aims to promote the inclusion of individuals and groups, to prevent discrimination, and to increase equality and gender balance at all levels of the organization. NTNU must be a place where people develop and experience a sense of belonging, and the plan will contribute to this. Integrating the development plan with our core activities will enable the plan to contribute to high quality in the learning and working environment. The development plan must be seen in the context of NTNU’s other strategies, development plans and policies, especially NTNU’s human resources policy, language policy and international development plan.

Responsibility for putting the development plan into practice is an important managerial task, but all employees and students have a responsibility for working towards the goals of the plan in their day-to-day activities at the university. The goals of the development plan and associated measures must be realized through specific initiatives in the annual plans of the faculties, departments and the central university administration. The units develop measures in the areas where they have specific challenges. The management of the units will regularly follow up developments during the planning period.

A dedicated website provides useful tips and tools for the units to support their work on relevant measures.

<https://s.ntnu.no/likestilling-verktoy>

NTNU's policies and plans covering areas within gender equality and diversity: the human resources policy, language policy, international development plan and NTNU's action plan for an inclusive learning environment. There is some overlap between these plans, and in areas where it is relevant one should consult different plans.



Employees at NTNU in a workshop.
Photo: Thor Nielsen.

1. Gender balance among students and staff

The concept of gender balance refers to a binary gender definition – male/ female – because this is used in the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act. For the other focus areas in the plan, we will use the term “all genders” to include those who do not define themselves in the binary categories.

An important tool for achieving better gender equality and diversity is to improve gender balance. Gender balance is not simply a question of numbers, but an important tool for “de-gendering” disciplines and subject areas, and in the longer term for helping to reduce gender segregation as well as counteracting gender stereotyping in research and education. Improving gender balance also helps to create the conditions for other forms of diversity. Gender balance among staff and students has an impact on the work and learning environment. Gender balance and other forms of diversity also influence the experiences and perspectives that are brought into research and programmes of study. A diverse university helps to enrich knowledge production, which benefits more people in our society. For NTNU to fulfil its social mission, the university must therefore recruit managers and employees of all genders and backgrounds. Today, there is gender imbalance in many disciplines and women are still under-represented in top-level academic positions. Targeted efforts must therefore be made to recruit students of all genders and all backgrounds, as well as to recruit more women to top-level positions. This will be achieved by improving the quality of hiring processes, pursuing active career development and working actively to create an inclusive working environment for everyone, but especially for under-represented groups.



NTNU Honorary Doctor Patricia Lago and NTNU Honorary Award recipient Erik Must.
Photo: Thor Nielsen

1.1 Gender balance among employees and managers

It is important for NTNU to recruit leaders and academic staff of all genders in order to contribute a diverse range of perspectives and experiences to the university and to provide good role models.

Goals

NTNU must strive to achieve gender balance and counter discrimination based on gender in recruitment and appointment, salary determination and career development for staff and managers. NTNU will make active efforts to increase the proportion of women in top-level academic positions by 2025. At faculties where a gender is under-represented, specific steps must be taken to improve the gender balance among students and staff.

Actions

- The faculties and departments will analyse their own situation and take their actions to achieve NTNU's strategic goals for gender balance in top-level academic positions.
- Skills and knowledge about gender equality and diversity must be included in the leadership development programme for Heads of Departments.
- Units with more than 20 employees and fewer than 35 % of one gender should achieve an improvement of 2–3 percentage points during the period.
- NTNU will ensure good candidates and greater diversity among applicants by using measures such as search committees.
- Leaders at NTNU must have a conscious attitude to equality, inclusion and diversity. Skills in this area are emphasized in the recruitment of new managers.
- Education, experience and results must be given equal weight for women and men in new appointments and pay negotiations. The principle of equal pay for equal work must be followed in the appointment of staff and in pay negotiations.

- Through employee development and appraisal interviews and discussion of the topic at department seminars, units must work actively to create the conditions that make it possible to combine an academic career and family life.

1.2 Gender balance in education

Traditional choices characterize the gender balance among students, and there is over-representation of one gender in several disciplines.

Goal

NTNU will strive to achieve gender balance and an inclusive study environment in all study programmes.

Actions

- NTNU will apply to the Ministry of Education and Research to award points on the basis of gender for study programmes that meet the criteria for the scheme, and where gender points are expected to have an effect on the gender balance of the programme.
- For study programmes where the proportion of students of the under-represented gender is less than 25 %, NTNU's faculties must implement initiatives to improve recruitment.
- For study programmes where the proportion of students of the under-represented gender is less than 25 % or fewer than five students, NTNU's faculties must take steps to increase their motivation to complete their studies.
- The student organizations at NTNU are encouraged to work towards gender balance and representation in all groups and committees.
- NTNU will ensure that all students have a fully satisfactory learning environment.



Students by NTNU sign.
Photo: Geir Mogen

2. Diversity and inclusion

There is already great diversity among students and staff at NTNU. This both enriches and challenges NTNU's culture, staff competence, use of language, and existing systems for recruitment, inclusion, and unlocking the potential that diversity represents.

To ensure genuine inclusion, equal opportunities, psychological safety and a sense of security, NTNU will work systematically and strategically with diversity and inclusion in recruitment and management at all levels. We will strive to ensure that under-represented groups are recruited to management positions and represented in a variety of academic programmes, in syllabuses and in elected positions. This means that each unit will form its own understanding of what type of diversity exists or does not exist and which groups or perspectives are under-represented for the unit. The unit must then explore ways to recruit students from diverse backgrounds and assess what measures will be needed to achieve inclusion of the under-represented groups concerned. Integrating a perspective of diversity into the university requires employees to develop awareness of the diversity in the population. Insight into this must be integrated in the development of academic curriculums, for example in the use of syllabus texts, or in the choice of cases and examples. This also entails an awareness and understanding of the need for data that reflects the diversity of the population in research, design and innovation.

Goal

NTNU will be an open, safe and inclusive place to work and study, where all the staff and students feel that they belong, that they are important in the community and have opportunities for

active participation and co-determination, and where a diversity perspective is integrated into research and teaching.

Actions

- NTNU will make diversity visible and include diversity in communication and information through the conscious use of language and symbols. NTNU will take part in and organize events that contribute to inclusion and raising awareness. We will highlight challenges as well as the resources that diversity represents.
- NTNU will work actively to adopt a diversity perspective in research and teaching.
- NTNU will work actively to ensure that innovation and design are based on data that reflect the diversity of the population.
- NTNU's recruitment processes must have an inclusive approach to a wide variety of applicants.
- Faculties, departments and divisions in the university administration must chart their own challenges and take steps to boost diversity and inclusion.
- NTNU will actively combat racism.



Marine technology students.
Photo: Geir Mogen



Students at Civil and Environmental Engineering.
Photo: Geir Mogen

3. International employees and students

Here, “international employees and students” refers to employees and students who are recruited from countries outside Norway.

NTNU aims to be an attractive university for employees and students from all over the world. Diversity of perspectives and cultures is enriching for the university. Integration into the academic and study environments is important for well-being and the opportunity to succeed in studies, research and teaching activities. Strengthening of reception programmes and integration efforts is a priority.

Goal

NTNU will create the conditions for staff and students who are recruited from other countries to thrive and experience mastery.

Actions

- NTNU will increase capacity and flexibility in the provision of Norwegian language courses for international staff and students where relevant.
- Departments will designate mentors for international employees during their first year.
- Management training at NTNU will emphasize taking care of this group and providing tailored practical measures to assist them.
- Faculties should carry out introductory programmes for all international employees.
- NTNU will strive for the inclusion of all international students.
- NTNU will strive to establish services and initiatives that support inclusion of refugees in NTNU’s academic culture.

4. Functional diversity

Often, the majority population does not notice the barriers that confront people with disability or functional variations in everyday life. These can affect their potential to study and work. NTNU needs their specialized skills and experience. Adaptations and inclusion to create a sense of belonging are therefore important to safeguard and promote inclusion in study programmes and working life.

Goal

NTNU will create conditions that contribute to well-being and mastery for staff and students with disability.

Actions

- NTNU will develop a comprehensive plan for universal design that includes digital tools.
- NTNU must ensure universal design of lectures, events and information exchange.
- NTNU will follow up NTNU's action plan for an inclusive learning environment for students with disability, including inbound and outbound students.
- NTNU will improve the skills of its managers in adaptation and support for people with disability and ensure effective procedures for adaptation and accessibility.



From a NTNU event.
Photo: Åge Hojem



From NTNU's participation in the Pride march in 2022 in Trondheim.
Photo: Espen Skagen

5. Gender identity, sexuality and gender expression

Here, LGBT+ is used to refer to people and groups who do not conform to norms of gender and sexuality. These include, but are not limited to, people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex.

People with a gender identity, sexuality or gender expression different from the majority population are a less visible group. Many of them choose to hide their true selves in fear of negative reactions from colleagues and fellow students. NTNU aims to be an organization that shows respect for all people regardless of their gender identity, sexuality and gender expression. By raising awareness, we can combat intolerance and discrimination.

Goal

NTNU will be an open and inclusive organization where no one is subjected to discrimination or harassment based on their gender identity, sexuality or gender expression.

Actions

- In its communication, dissemination, outreach and signage of premises, NTNU will use language and symbols that include everyone.
- Gender identity, sexuality and gender expression will be highlighted in relevant events, research and education.

6. Discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment

NTNU has zero tolerance for sexual harassment, harassment, sexual abuse, racism and other abuse of power. NTNU must be a safe place to work and study. NTNU will work continuously to develop a culture that combats harassment. It is important that fellow students and colleagues show respect to each other and that they know where to find information and seek assistance when needed. Managers have a duty to act when they are informed of unacceptable behaviour.

Goal

Discrimination, harassment, racism and sexual harassment of staff and students must not occur at NTNU.

Actions

- NTNU will develop awareness-raising training on these topics for staff and students to prevent discrimination, sexual harassment, racism and harassment.
- NTNU's zero tolerance of harassment and abuse of power will be integrated in the introductory programme for PhD candidates and international employees.
- Everyone with management responsibility must set clear boundaries and signal clear expectations of mutual respect and good collegial behaviour and cooperation.
- All staff and students should know about the whistleblowing channel so that they can report incidents if they or others are subjected to sexual harassment and unwanted sexual attention.



Illustration.
Photo: Christine Sæthre



Employees at NTNU.
Photo: Nina Tranø

7. Resources for the work

The development plan aims to strengthen and systematize a holistic commitment to promote and further develop gender equality and diversity by raising the awareness of managers, staff and students as well as through development initiatives at the units, physical adaptations, and inclusive communication. Our most important resources in this work are our staff and students and their everyday efforts to include, create a sense of belonging and further develop diversity at the university. Every one of us has a responsibility here.

Useful tips and tools for this work will be published on the website: Gender equality and diversity – tools for leaders.

<https://s.ntnu.no/likestilling-verktoy>

Management development and management support

Gender equality and diversity are a managerial responsibility. Specific initiatives will be launched during the strategy period to support NTNU's leaders in their work towards achieving the goals:

- Gender equality and diversity must regularly be a topic in management forums (such as the Rector's meetings with Heads of Departments and dialogue meetings with the faculties)
- Measures will be taken to develop the skills of managers and administrative support staff. The line management and HR take the initiative for launching the measures and following them up.

Universal design

We need a comprehensive plan for universal design and for improving access to resources. Important resources in this work are:

- physical adaptation (NTNU Property Division)
- organization of the workplace (Occupational Health Service, HSE and HR)
- inclusive practice and support for student life (NTNU Disability Office)
- sign language interpreters (NAV)
- English simultaneous interpretation (purchase of services as needed)

Internationalization

Internationalization is an area of focus and information is continuously improved. The NTNU Office of International Relations (OIR) looks after the needs of international students. Units/ departments take care of their own international researchers, with support from the HR and HSE Division.

Committee for gender equality and diversity

The committee is to provide advice and be a driving force in ensuring that compliance with the legal requirements for gender equality and diversity at NTNU.

The committee will advise the Rector on ways to contribute to:

- enabling NTNU to reflect the diversity in the population in terms of gender, age, functional needs, ethnic background and sexual orientation,
- increased knowledge and strengthened development of gender equality and diversity at NTNU,
- planning and implementation of measures to increase gender equality and diversity at NTNU, and
- effective use and allocation of NTNU's funds for equality and diversity.

