**Toolbox for diversity and inclusion at NTNU**

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1. **Introduction**

NTNU aims to be a diverse university by preventing discrimination while creating inclusion and a sense of belonging for everyone. In NTNU’s strategies, gender equality and diversity are linked with NTNU’s value *respectful*, which means that all employees, managers and students have a responsibility to contribute to respect, equality and tolerance in the academic community. Using human resources in the best way possible and safeguarding gender equality and diversity are essential for the quality of NTNU as an employer and place of study, and for NTNU to fulfil its social mission. Under the Working Environment Act, the Universities and University Colleges Act, and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, NTNU has an obligation to promote gender equality and prevent discrimination.

At NTNU, a strong focus on gender balance and equality between men and women is a long tradition. In recent years, this commitment has been extended to include ethnic diversity and inclusion of minority groups. Gender equality is still an important focus area. One of the aspects of increasing diversity is to create space for gender diversity and different expressions of gender identity beyond male and female. Working for gender equality and efforts to increase diversity in other fields have many shared challenges and solutions. You can read about measures to improve gender equality in the Norwegian report ‘Verktøykasse for bedre kjønnsbalanse’ [Toolbox for Better Gender Balance](2018).

**How to use this document**

This document is a resource for all the units at NTNU in their efforts to fulfil NTNU’s Development Plan for Equality and Diversity. We have concentrated on three areas: international employees and students, functional diversity, and gender identity – expression of sexuality and gender. For each of these areas, we present the background, potential measures at institutional and unit level, and resources that are available in this work for all employees. We also refer to three priority areas that are important in diversity efforts: Recruitment, career support and the work environment. The toolbox also includes several suggestions for general measures to promote inclusion in the units. There is no one-size-fits-all rule for ensuring diversity and inclusion across different groups, and we therefore encourage units to work systematically on realizing NTNU’s values of inclusion, tolerance and equality in the academic community as part of its policy for personnel, recruitment and the work environment.

The issue of diversity and inclusion is complex, and the aim of this report is not that everyone should reach the goal in all areas at once. We know that the units face many demands and requirements, and so we have tried to simplify the process by dividing the measures into two areas of responsibility: institutional level and unit level. Since this work is also resource-intensive and can be complex, units can apply for funds for implementation and skills development.

1. **Why are we working towards diversity and inclusion?**

NTNU is a multicultural workplace with great diversity in nations and cultures. The diversity of the population also includes functional variations, sexuality and gender expression. In everyday working life, much of this diversity is hidden. Identity categories are not static and may vary during the lifetime of the individual. For example, internationally recruited employees may gain Norwegian citizenship, and people may change their legally recognized gender or experience a temporary or permanent variation in their level of function. A broad base of international research shows that diversity and inclusion in the workplace are linked to productivity and satisfaction among employees (Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010; Corley & Sabharwal, 2007, Lauring & Selmer, 2010). Correspondingly, academic environments where day-to-day discrimination and harassment occur have a negative impact on the satisfaction of all employees in the academic community, not only those who are directly affected (Silverschanz, Cortina, Konik, & Magley, 2008). Stereotypes, prejudices and everyday racism often take the form of microaggressions, such as subtle comments or jokes that may not have been intended to be hurtful, but that in practice have an exclusionary effect in everyday life (Gressgård, 2014).

Visible diversity in the workplace may provide a way to improve recruitment to the unit because individuals no longer need to be the only ones who stand out as different, and thoughtful routines for generosity and inclusion will make it easier for people to express their own identity. Work cultures with little diversity or room for differences can cause people to underplay parts of their identity; for example, people may play down a disability because they are afraid of spoiling their career opportunities, or they may hide their sexual/gender identity for fear of reprisals from colleagues (Boustani & Taylor, 2020). A healthy work environment that is perceived as psychologically safe with supportive colleagues will increase both well-being and productivity among all employees. With well-functioning routines for inclusion, it will also be easier to make talented employees feel welcome, regardless of their background. For these reasons, increased diversity is a resource in the work environment.

1. **Mapping and situational awareness**

A key aspect of the work with equality and diversity at NTNU is mapping and situational awareness at the units. Different units face different challenges, and a general plan that applies to the whole of NTNU cannot address all the variations in such a complex area. This was strengthened through additional legal requirements in 2021. At that time, stricter requirements were introduced than those in the existing Act on Equality and Discrimination, stating that all employers must work purposefully and actively over time to promote equality and prevent discrimination. Implementation of measures in line with the Development Plan for Gender Equality and Diversity 2023-2025 contributes to NTNU’s fulfilment of the requirements for activity and reporting in this Act.

All units must carry out local mapping and analysis and must implement measures. They must use the method specified in the [Aktivitets- og redegjørelsesplikt (ARP) for arbeidsgivere | Bufdir [Activity and reporting obligation for employers | Bufdir]](https://ny.bufdir.no/fagstotte/produkter/aktivitets__og_redegjorelsesplikt_for_arbeidsgivere/). Not all units can do everything and it is therefore necessary to set priorities, in consultation with management and union representatives. NTNU’s Joint Administration is responsible for reporting on pay surveys, gender balance and gender differences in part-time work, temporary employment, parental leave and involuntary part-time work. This toolbox has been specially developed to support efforts to put the development plan into operation, thus fulfilling the requirement for activity and reporting.

The three focus areas in diversity and inclusion that we focus on in this report appear below: background information on the topic, and some specific measures both at institutional level and at unit level for the work. The structure will be recognizable from the Development Plan for Equality and Diversity (2023).

1. **Diversity and inclusion**

Developing a basis for diversity involves preventing discrimination, negative language and exclusion, as well as ensuring active inclusion and facilitation. It can be difficult to measure a sense of identity and belonging within diversity. For example, some people may have the formal status of an internationally recruited researcher, but they may have lived in Norway for a long time and developed a Norwegian identity. People can be assigned a different nationality than the one they have. It is also difficult to know which formal category makes a real difference, and people may have conflicting interests. For these reasons, a spirit of generosity is important in work towards an inclusive work environment, where differences are seen as resources. Here, you will find an overview of knowledge, specific action points (some new and some from the Development Plan for Equality and Diversity, 2023) and resources for further work.

Diversity is more than just the categories we focus on here. Among other things, people may experience discrimination linked to age. We would also like to emphasize that social and economic class can influence the level of belonging and participation in the university culture for students and employees. The various categories can also interact to create different forms of stereotypes or discrimination.

Cutting across all this potential for discrimination, we want to highlight the following measures that appear in the Development Plan for Equality and Diversity (2023).

**At the institutional level**

* NTNU must promote and include diversity in communication and information through the conscious use of language and symbols. NTNU must 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 make active efforts to adopt a perspective of diversity 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.
* NTNU will actively combat racism.

**At the unit level**

* The faculty, the unit and the departments in the joint administration must map their own challenges and implement measures to promote diversity and inclusion.

4.1 International employees and students

**4.1.1 Background**

Thanks to NTNU’s ambitions to recruit skilled researchers internationally and ensure mobility to and from Norway among employees and students, NTNU is today a multicultural centre for work and study with great diversity of nations. This is an area that has received attention in Norwegian public discourse in recent years. Research in Norway shows that one out of four researchers with an immigrant background experiences discrimination and lack of inclusion (Erdal, Knutsen & Midtbøen, 2019). In Norway, researchers who were born abroad have reported on exclusionary practices related to Norwegian skills, internal recruitment and unwritten social rules that make integration into the academic community difficult (Maximova-Mentzoni et al., 2016). A report from NTNU also shows that international researchers have called for better and more structured onboarding and orientation procedures as well as more social inclusion (Flikke et al, 2020).

When we talk about international diversity, we would like to encourage reflection on which nationality is dominant. At Norwegian universities, a broad diversity of nations is common at PhD and postdoctoral level. We would like to encourage reflection on the diversity that also exists among permanent employees and in technical and administrative positions.

**4.1.2 Actions**

**At the institutional level**

* NTNU will increase capacity and flexibility in the provision of Norwegian language courses for international staff and students where this is relevant.
* NTNU will work to establish programmes and initiatives that foster inclusion of refugees in NTNU’s academic culture.
* NTNU aims to work for inclusion of all international students.
* Management training at NTNU will emphasize taking care of this group and providing tailored measures to meet their needs.
* NTNU will follow up on the implementation of skills development measures for managers and administrative support services as presented in the Development Plan for Gender Equality and Diversity and ensure that these are regular topics in management forums.

**At the unit level**

* All units should provide well-functioning onboarding and orientation procedures. For this work, units can use the guidelines on Innsida, which are updated regularly:

[https://i.ntnu.no/wiki/-/wiki/Norsk/Mottak+av+ny+medarbeider](https://i.ntnu.no/wiki/-/wiki/Norsk/Mottak%2Bav%2Bny%2Bmedarbeider)

* Faculties should complete an introductory programme for all international employees.
* The introductory programme may include communication of unwritten social rules, norms and implicit expectations for employees at NTNU and at the unit. Early communication of unwritten rules can help to avoid conflicts based on cultural differences.
* People with management responsibility should take advantage of the competence, experience and knowledge they gain through management forums. Managers must show an understanding of cultural diversity in their leadership and set an example for their network of colleagues.
* Organizing events that give individuals a sense that they belong in their community is an important initiative for fostering inclusion. At unit level, regular social events can be arranged for employees both at work and outside the workplace. Examples of inclusive events include communal lunches, cake on Fridays, joint trips away from the workplace and informal “payday” gatherings.
* Reflect on what types of events might seem exclusionary. For example, not all employees are comfortable with payday gatherings that automatically involve alcohol.
* Inform all employees that such events are an important social arena where everyone is welcome.
* People with responsibility for employees, such as group leaders or supervisors, are encouraged to follow up if someone stops participating in communal events.
* The units must appoint a mentor for international employees during their first year.

**4.1.3 Network and resources**

* NTNU International Researcher Support (NIRS) <https://www.ntnu.edu/nirs>
* DION: interest group for PhD candidates, postdoctoral fellows and other temporary academic staff <https://org.ntnu.no/dion/>
* NTNU Mottaksprosedyrar / Onboarding: [https://i.ntnu.no/wiki/-/wiki/Norsk/Mottak+av+ny+medarbeider](https://i.ntnu.no/wiki/-/wiki/Norsk/Mottak%2Bav%2Bny%2Bmedarbeider)

4.2 Functional diversity

**4.2.1 Background**

All individuals have their own level of functioning, and variations in this level can be physical or mental, visible or invisible. Universal design is about design for everyone, so that no one is excluded. Many people will go through some form of functional variation during their lifetime, such as a temporary injury, diagnosis, pregnancy, or condition associated with age. This means that all employees will benefit from units that have good routines for organization, flexibility, support functions and universally designed premises. At an institutional level, NTNU should ensure universal design, and at the units it is important to ensure accessibility and adaptations as well as to counter a culture of negative attitudes towards people with functional variations. We know that students with a disability may work hard to minimize potential stigma, showcase their resources and demonstrate that they are ‘good enough’ (Langørgen, 2019). People in research positions often experience a researcher ideal focused on being independent and self-sufficient while constantly giving one’s all and producing results. We must avoid a culture where people play down their needs for adaptations for fear of not living up to this ideal (Yerbury & Yerbury, 2021).

**4.2.2 Actions**

**At the institutional level**

* NTNU, as an employer, has a responsibility for providing accessibility and adaptations for employees, and as a place of study it has a corresponding responsibility for students.
* NTNU is to develop a comprehensive plan for universal design that includes digital tools.
* NTNU will 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 disabilities, including inbound and outbound students.
* NTNU will improve the skills of its managers in inclusive practice and support for people with disabilities and will ensure effective procedures for adaptation and accessibility.
* Live captioning can be provided for online meetings, and large formal events should be universally designed.

**At the unit level**

* All units should ensure effective procedures that support universal design for employees, students and visitors.
* Units should make use of the resources available both internally at NTNU and externally.
* Functional diversity and the challenges this entails are often invisible to the majority population. Units should foster a work culture that is conscious of inclusive language and attitudes.
* There should be individual staff-student and manager-employee follow-up to map needs and increase retention of students and staff.
* Often, simple measures may meet the need, such as the use of digital tools, well-planned room lighting, or universal design of lectures.
* The employee interview is a helpful tool in this work. Where relevant, adaptations and individual follow-up can also be included in guidance between students/PhD candidates and supervisors.
* Keep students and new employees informed about the resources available to them.

**4.2.3 Networks and resources**

* Physical adaptation (NTNU Property Division)
* Adaptations for students through measures such as accessible study places, syllabuses in audio format and software for reading and writing support. (NTNU Disability Office) <https://i.ntnu.no/tilrettelegging>.
* Accessibility and adaptation of the workplace for employees (Occupational Health Service, HSE and HR)
* Sign language interpreters through the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)
* English simultaneous interpretation (purchase of services as needed)
* NTNU Occupational Health Service and HR for employees
* NTNU arranges several courses and support groups for students on the autism spectrum or who have dyslexia or ADHD. See the web pages for more information: [https://i.ntnu.no/wiki/-/wiki/Norsk/Tilrettelegging+-+kurs+og+grupper](https://i.ntnu.no/wiki/-/wiki/Norsk/Tilrettelegging%2B-%2Bkurs%2Bog%2Bgrupper)
* Norwegian Association of Disabled People [Funksjonshemmedes Fellesorganisasjon]: <https://ffo.no/>

4.3 Gender identity, sexuality and gender expression

**4.3.1 Background**

NTNU aims to be an open and inclusive organization where everyone should be able to study and work in safety, free from discrimination based on gender expression and sexuality. Working to create space for different types of gender expression beyond the binary categories of male and female is an important part of the commitment to gender justice and equality. Variations in sexuality are often concealed, while different expressions of gender identity are a more visible marker that may differ from what is perceived as normal. It is important that NTNU is a workplace where people do not feel that they must conceal their sexuality or suppress their gender expression for fear of reprisals from colleagues or negative effects on their career opportunities, as we know happens elsewhere (Boustani & Taylor, 2020).

Disparaging comments about people belonging to the LGBTQ+ community can raise the threshold for people to come out and express their identity. This is why it is important to focus on culture, language use and attitudes in this area. Discrimination can range from insensitive comments and insults to jokes and humour linked to sexuality and gender stereotypes. Such microaggressions may be intended as harmless or an attempt at humour, but they may become part of an unhealthy culture that has an exclusionary effect on the individual. This is particularly important because variations in sexuality and gender identity may not be disclosed in the workplace. Managers can organize group dialogue between employees to ensure that everyone has a common understanding of a spirit of generosity and tolerance in the work environment and to prevent misunderstandings based on age or cultural differences.

**4.3.2 Actions**

**At the institutional level**

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

**At the unit level**

* Managers should have a focus on culture, awareness and use of language usage and should have zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment based on an individual’s sexuality, gender identity or gender expression.
* People who come out must be met with understanding and respect from colleagues and managers. This includes correct pronoun use and different forms of gender expression (for example in dress and personal style).
* Managers can organize focus groups where employees can discuss experiences and attitudes. They are encouraged to draw on in-house resources from NTNU or from the Rosa kompetanse section of the Norwegian Association for Sexual and Gender Diversity (FRI), which provides information and guidance on sexual and gender diversity in the public and private sectors.

**4.3.3 Networks and resources**

* The LGBTQ network functions as a resource network and contact point for LGBTQ+ employees at NTNU, including PhD candidates, postdocs and other temporary employees. [https://i.ntnu.no/wiki/-/wiki/Norsk/LGBTQ-nettverket+p%C3%A5+NTNU](https://i.ntnu.no/wiki/-/wiki/Norsk/LGBTQ-nettverket%2Bp%C3%A5%2BNTNU)
* Students have the organizations Skeive Studenter Trondheim and FRI Trondheim
* The Norwegian Association for Sexual and Gender Diversity (FRI) offers courses in Rosa Kompetanse (Pink Competency): <https://www.foreningenfri.no/rosa-kompetanse/om-rosa-kompetanse/> to which various networks at NTNU can invite participants. This may be particularly important for employees who are in direct contact with students, such as student advisers. They also offer social activity groups for LGBTQ+ students in Trondheim.

1. **Priority areas**

Work with equality and diversity takes place at the units, and it is important to see this work in the context of existing work areas. For example, measures aimed at the work environment and inclusion will also contribute to diversity and gender balance. Three identified focus areas with proposals for specific measures are described below: Work environment and management, recruitment, and career support.

* 1. Work environment and management

A sound work environment is characterized by a lack of discrimination and exclusion, and an active awareness of respectful language, openness, room for differences, a spirit of generosity and tolerance with a social and academic community where no one is excluded. All employees have a responsibility to take care of this. For managers, increasing diversity does not mean constantly focusing on an individual’s gender, nationality or ethnicity, but rather welcoming any differences as a resource in the workplace. Because of the responsibility that managers have, we would encourage NTNU to ensure that managers have the skills they need to do a good job in this area. Constructive attitudes, room for differences and conscious use of language should be embedded in the work environment culture, regardless of how diverse the workplace is. If divisive cultures such as inappropriate humour, condescending language and exclusion have gained a foothold, this will be difficult to deal with, especially for new hires and those who belong to a minority group. It is therefore important to focus on microaggressions, as well as more obvious cases of discrimination. New employees should be introduced to local academic and work culture and should be actively included in social events such as communal lunches or payday gatherings.

In the work environment, we will emphasize the importance of attention to the use of language, because language is powerful and can build inclusion or exclusion. It may be helpful to use the new language policy guidelines as a resource.

**Actions:**

* Managers can organize focus groups where employees can have dialogue experiences and share experiences.
* Heads of units should use the annual ARK survey of the work environment and organizational climate to gain an overview of the situation for their employees and follow up on initiatives/action plans.
* All units can hold focus group meetings where employees share experiences and have an opportunity to develop a common understanding.
* All units should organize a wide range of regular academic and social activities, ranging from annual seminars, joint lunches, group trips and social gatherings before the collective holiday period in summer. Implementation of these activities should be formalized to a certain extent and should not depend on the dedication of individuals.
* Units can also arrange seminars, courses and guest lectures in their field. For this purpose, the unit can use the network and knowledge of its own people.
* Follow up on NTNU’s new policy of giving all new recruits a mentor in their academic community.
* Group leaders and supervisors have a special responsibility to ensure that everyone is included in academic and social contexts, to encourage participation, and to reach out if anyone starts to isolate themselves.
* Employees also have a responsibility to actively include colleagues and stand up against discrimination in all forms, even when the discrimination takes the form of subtle comments, attempts at humour or other microaggressions that were not intended to be offensive.
* All employees at the unit have a responsibility to develop a generous and open work culture. This includes fostering clear awareness that much diversity is invisible and the need to be conscious of underlying attitudes and language use.
	1. Recruitment

**5.2.1 Recruitment to researcher positions**

Recruitment creates opportunities for greater diversity. Recruitment to academic positions differs from recruitment to many other types of positions, where there are expectations of mobility and turnover. At the same time, people are often recruited from master’s programmes to PhD programmes, and from temporary to permanent positions. In recruitment to research positions, appointments may depend on a variety of factors, such as publication points, teaching competence, networks or specialized competence in a research field. Researchers with a background from outside Norway may find it difficult to be included and build a career in Norway because of requirements for proficiency in Norwegian, networks, internal recruitment, or social norms (Maximova-Mentzoni et al, 2016). It is therefore particularly important to have transparency about what mechanisms are used and what is emphasized in the allocation of positions, especially sought-after permanent positions.

**Actions:**

* Recruitment committees should focus on developing awareness of their underlying attitudes and not overlooking applicants due to prejudices linked to ethnicity, nationality, etc. This focus must also be maintained throughout the entire recruitment process and not just be present at the start.
* Reflect on the entire competence of the applicant, including how cultural and linguistic differences could be an advantage for the academic environment.
* Make sure that recruitment committees are diverse and ask international researchers to use their networks to find potential candidates for positions in narrow specialist fields.
* Diversity should also be on the agenda in recruitment for permanent positions, to avoid high levels of diversity among temporary positions that are not reflected among permanent employees.
* In the recruitment of women to fields where they are underrepresented, emphasis can be placed on the Norwegian welfare state and work-family life balance.

**5.2.2 Recruitment to technical and administrative positions**

Requirements for proficiency in Norwegian are common in recruitment to technical and administrative positions, and statistics show that there is less international diversity in this group than among academic staff. In several administrative positions, researcher support is an important part of the job. Reflect on how multilingualism, personal experience with mobility, cultural differences and fresh perspectives from other work cultures can represent resources.

**Actions:**

* Units can use the recruitment process as an opportunity to increase diversity.
* Reflect on hidden resources in the pile of applications.
* Recruitment committees should be aware that diversity among technical and administrative employees is important for the organization because these employees are to work towards ensuring diversity.
	1. Career support

While NTNU aims to have an ambitious recruitment policy, which entails high turnover and mobility to and from Norway, career development is an important part of our human resources policy. According to this policy, a career perspective centres on making employees aware of future work opportunities where they can use their potential and it creates a basis for predictable career paths in the organization. The human resources policy also highlights how good guidance and early introduction to relevant projects and networks are important for quality in the researcher education, as well as giving valuable competencies for people’s further careers both within and outside of academia. Units should reflect on how to foster talent and make their students and employees attractive candidates. This particularly applies to people at an early stage in their career. Actions in this area are mainly directed at managers and supervisors.

**Actions:**

Managers, teaching staff members, supervisors and group leaders can

* Ensure that career development is a key part of the employee interview. The career and competence plan must be drawn up in a separate meeting for this purpose and must be included in the employee interview.
* Reflect on the distribution of work in the unit. Ensure that work assignments that may bring prestige or recognition of merit are evenly distributed between employees.
* It may be valuable to review the routines and practices of recent years and see how this distribution of work has taken place. Have any candidates unintentionally been given prestigious tasks while others have been given a lot of administrative tasks?
* Make sure that everyone has or receives good information about which work has potential for recognition of merit and is important for success in Norwegian academia. Ensure transparency about which types of merit are emphasized in appointments.
* Provide opportunities for international researchers to take part in Norwegian courses and learn Norwegian in order to qualify for further work in Norwegian academia.
* PhD candidates and postdocs should be included in academic and social networks, get tips about conferences, and be offered help with writing applications.
* Inform employees about vacancies, encourage them to apply, and include temporary employees in application processes.
* Events such as joint seminars and lectures should represent the diversity of the unit in terms of who speaks, presents, and has an opportunity to tell their story.

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