

2022–2025 Gender Equality and Diversity Action Plan

Case: 17/00460

Approved by the Bord 8/12-21

Contents

1.	Background and overarching objectives.....	2
1.1.	Objectives and vision	2
1.2.	Statutory foundation	3
1.3.	The duty to promote gender equality and issue statements	3
2.	Objectives and actions to safeguard gender equality and diversity.....	4
	Objective 1: Increased gender balance in academic and administrative positions at every level	4
	Objective 2: Include employees with varying levels of functional capacity	5
	Objective 3: Increase the work on ethnic diversity	6
	Objective 4: Increase competence related to diversity management at every management level in the organisation.....	7
	Objective 5: Increased gender balance in health and social care education	8

1. Background and overarching objectives

The objective of VID Specialized University's Gender Equality and Diversity Action Plan is to promote gender equality and diversity in accordance with VID's values.

- Holistic perspective on humanity
- Solidarity
- Forward-looking knowledge

Our motto is: *committed to people – locally and globally.*

The purpose of the action plan is to ensure that VID's vision, strategy and objectives are achieved by actively promoting diversity, an inclusive, attractive and stimulating psychosocial working environment, and by preventing discrimination at the workplace.

1.1. Objectives and vision

VID's objective is to continuously work to achieve diversity and equality. The objective is not only based on legislation, but is also entrenched in VID's value of a holistic perspective on humanity. VID takes people seriously, regardless of their relationship with VID, and irrespective of whether they are students, employees, job applicants or partners. VID has an inclusive perspective on humanity, and does not accept discrimination on the basis of gender, pregnancy, leave in connection with childbirth or adoption, care responsibilities, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or age.

VID is also of the opinion that diversity and gender equality improve the quality of the staff, through each person's individuality and their efforts. Individual differences create diversity; differences which may be related to different factors like gender, and cultural and geographic background (ethnicity), language, attitudes and values. Research shows that enterprises benefit from diversity. Positive internal effects are created through cognitive diversity, which entails different approaches to problem-solving, greater creativity, greater flexibility, and strengthening of cultural values and languages. Positive external diversity effects may include an improved reputation and benefits in terms of recruitment.¹

In order to ensure that VID is able to achieve its overarching objectives, it is critical that VID is able to attract and retain the most qualified candidates. Equality and diversity work that is deeply rooted in VID will help make it an attractive workplace. The equality and diversity work will also help ensure that competent workers and candidates are seen and acknowledged for their competence, irrespective of gender, background or functional capacity, and will ensure that challenges related to differences are no obstacle.

Studies show that it is necessary to not only increase diversity; it is important to also increase diversity management in order to realise the positive effects of diversity.² Diversity work should be an integral part of strategy work and organisational management, with a clear vision and objectives, with support from the management and board level. At the same time, it is important to increase the maturity and competence related to diversity management at every level of the organisation by working with culture, norms and values.

¹Forkning.no: <https://forskning.no/arbeid-ledelse-og-organisasjon-demografi/2009/10/mangfold-er-lonnsomt>

² "Mangfold gir konkurransefortrinn – en ubenyttet ressurs for norske selskaper" (Diversity offers a competitive edge – an untapped resource for Norwegian companies), Accenture (2016)

As a responsible participant in society, with integrity at the core of its values, VID will ensure that diversity and gender equality are promoted through clear objectives and measures, and will work purposefully towards equality, diversity and inclusion, attracting committed and competent workers. Increasing its competence in diversity management will enable VID to exploit the benefits of diversity.

1.2. Statutory foundation

The Act Relating to Equality and a Prohibition Against Discrimination (Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act) provides a clear framework for VID as an employer. In accordance with the law, VID provides clear guidelines regarding discrimination on the basis of

‘gender, pregnancy, leave in connection with childbirth or adoption, care responsibilities, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age or combinations of these grounds. Ethnicity includes national origin, descent, skin colour and language.

The prohibition includes discrimination on the basis of actual, assumed, former or future factors specified in the first paragraph.

The prohibition also applies if a person is discriminated against on the basis of his or her connection with another person, when such discrimination is based on factors specified in the first paragraph.

‘Discrimination’ is defined as direct or indirect differential treatment pursuant to sections 7 and 8 that is not lawful pursuant to sections 9, 10 or 11.’³

The Universities and University Colleges Act also puts equality on the agenda in chapter 6 on appointments. **Section 6-2. Gender equality** states clearly that: ‘Universities and university colleges shall make active, targeted and systematic efforts to ensure gender equality in all categories of employment at the institution.’ Section 6-3 also specifies that when appointments are made, importance shall be attached to gender equality considerations.

1.3. The duty to promote gender equality and issue statements

As an employer, VID is under an obligation to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to ensure gender equality and prevent discrimination. Goals that have been set under objective 1: increased gender balance in academic and administrative positions, will be reported on in the tertiary management reports. Furthermore, the measures for which the individual units/faculties are responsible will be part of the annual action plan for the relevant units/faculties. In its annual report, VID will provide an account of:

- the current state of affairs with regard to gender equality at the undertaking
- gender equality measures that have been implemented or are planned in order to promote the Act's purpose of equality irrespective of gender
- equality measures that have been implemented or are planned in order to advance the Act's purpose of equality irrespective of gender, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression

See section 26a of the Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act.

³ Source: Act relating to equality and a prohibition against discrimination (Equality and Anti-discrimination Act)

In accordance with the legislation, it is a clear policy at VID that discrimination is prohibited. Measures to ensure compliance with this policy have been implemented, and are expressed in VID's guidelines and policy documents. A clear overview of the measures is provided in point 3 of the activity plan.

2. Objectives and actions to safeguard gender equality and diversity

VID will perform work to prevent discrimination, and will make active, targeted and systematic efforts to ensure gender equality and prevent discrimination.

Overarching objectives for the period 2022–2025.

- Objective 1: Increased gender balance in academic and administrative positions at every level.
- Objective 2: Include employees with varying levels of functional capacity.
- Objective 3: Increase the work on ethnic diversity.
- Objective 4: Increase competence on diversity management at every management level in the organisation.
- Objective 5: Increased gender balance in health and social care education.

Objective 1: Increased gender balance in academic and administrative positions at every level

In general, the lack of gender equality in working life is an obstacle to women, even though men may also experience it. In academia, the main focus is on the highest level of academic positions, where the imbalance is greatest. In 2020, 33.5%⁴ of the senior academic positions, i.e. dosent and professor positions, were filled by women, which is a slight increase from the preceding year (32% in 2019). Several of VID's programme options attract primarily one gender, which is also reflected in the teaching and research positions at the faculties these programme options are based at. VID's strategic decision to be an accredited scientific university college and to have an adequate number of employees at the associate professor and professor level is considered an important positive step within several of the female-dominated disciplines in which VID offers education. Programme options and study programmes that were previously mainly staffed by assistant professors now require more senior staff, and are implementing measures to improve qualifications.

VID's general gender equality governance parameter is the proportion of women in dosent and professor positions, with the target set at 50%. VID's targeted efforts have had good results in recent years, and VID has met its target, in that the overall gender balance is 50/50.

Breaking down the figures to the faculty level shows great differences between faculties. At VID, the units must therefore monitor gender equality in the different job categories, and actively implement measures where needed.

Ideally, VID wants a gender balance, and its goal is to work to achieve gender balance at every level, both in academic and administrative positions. According to the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research⁵, working environments with a poor gender balance are at greater risk of direct and indirect discrimination. The gender equality work can thus be seen in the context of efforts to

⁴ Source: <https://kifinfo.no/nb/content/statistikk-0#Kj%C3%B8nnsbalanse%20i%20vitenskapelige%20stillinger>

⁵ Source: <http://kifinfo.no/nb/content/trakassering-0>

combat harassment, and is consistent with VID's desire to counteract harassment among employees and students at VID.

Objectives

- Ensure that the proportion of women in dosent and professor positions at VID remains at a minimum of 50%.
- 50% of women/men in associate professor positions at VID.
- 50% of women/men in recruitment positions at VID.
- 50% of women/men in administrative positions at VID.
- Work to combat sexual harassment.

Actions:	Responsible:
Permanent positions must be advertised externally, and the appointment process must be transparent and clear in terms of what is sought.	Unit manager in collaboration with HR
The pool of applicants should include people of both genders. Active searches may be used if necessary.	Unit manager in collaboration with HR
Increase awareness of bias when using training measures that may result in an imbalance during candidate screening and selection.	Management meeting in collaboration with HR
When two candidates have the same or almost the same qualifications, positive differential treatment may be used as a policy instrument if one gender is underrepresented.	Unit manager in collaboration with HR
Counteract and increase the awareness of harassment by regularly reviewing VID's guidelines.	Managers and employees
Objectives are entered in 'Reporting of objectives' in the tertiary report	Unit manager

Objective 2: Include employees with varying levels of functional capacity

The employee's immediate superior is responsible for identifying individual needs for adaptation upon employment and at regular performance reviews.

VID aims to ensure that each candidate is seen and assessed in terms of their professional qualifications and suitability for the position, and is aware that disability and/or a need for adaptation

must not prevent the most qualified candidate from being appointed.⁶ VID also wants to contribute to the collective effort to achieve inclusion in society by including people with different levels of functional capacity and/or gaps in their CVs.

Actions:	Responsible:
People with different levels of functional capacity or gaps in their CVs who meet the advertised criteria must be considered for interview along the same lines as other candidates.	Units
Support for employees with a disability.	Units
The need for support should be brought up at a separate meeting after the offer of employment has been made and accepted.	Units
Offer work training in conjunction with NAV.	Units
Ensure that the text of the vacancy announcement clearly communicates that VID is an employer that includes candidates of different ages, genders, disabilities, with gaps in their CVs, and from different national or ethnic backgrounds.	Unit manager and HR

Objective 3: Increase the work on ethnic diversity

It is natural that the staff at VID reflect the diversity of Norwegian society as far as possible. According to Statistics Norway, 18.2% of Norway's population as at 1 January 2020 are immigrants or Norwegian-born to two immigrant parents. Statistics Norway uses the following definition of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents:

‘Immigrants are persons born abroad of two foreign-born parents and four foreign-born grandparents.

Norwegian-born to immigrant parents are born in Norway of two parents born abroad and in addition have four grandparents born abroad.’⁷

Internationalisation and VID's global perspective are also firmly based in the strategy plan. The general work with internationalisation will likely have a positive effect on the work to include foreign

⁶ Håndbok for arbeidslivet; Likestilling og mangfold. (Handbook for working life; Gender equality and diversity.) The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (2011)

⁷ <https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/statistikker/innvbef>

academics and other competence that can already be found in Norway (see immigrants or Norwegian-born to immigrant parents). The action plan will therefore look at this as a whole.

Actions:	Responsible:
Consider whether permanent positions should/can be available in English.	Unit manager
Provide training on implicit bias, which can result in a gender imbalance during candidate screening and selection.	Management meeting in collaboration with HR
If there are qualified applicants with minority backgrounds for the position, at least one of them must always be invited to an interview.	Unit manager/interview committee
Consider offering support for language courses and close follow-up of time-delimited objectives in relation to learning Norwegian.	Unit manager
Ensure that the text of the vacancy announcement clearly communicates that VID is an employer that includes candidates of different ages, genders, disabilities, with gaps in their CVs, and from different national or ethnic backgrounds.	Unit manager and HR

Objective 4: Increase competence related to diversity management at every management level in the organisation

Managing diversity can be difficult and labour-intensive, which makes it challenging. Language barriers, differences in disciplines, and cultural differences can be obstacles that are time-consuming and difficult to overcome.⁸ VID believes that it is a good idea to work with these issues throughout the organisation, so that experiences can be shared, discussed and illuminated from different perspectives. It is also important to increase awareness and the understanding of the benefits of diversity.

⁸ <https://forskning.no/arbeid-ledelse-og-organisasjon-demografi/2009/10/mangfold-er-lonnsomt>

Actions:	Responsible:
Hold a seminar on diversity management for managers at all levels.	Management meeting in collaboration with HR
Put diversity and diversity management on the agenda in different forums.	Management meeting, management meeting for shared resources, and unit managers.
Diversity on the agenda at the management meeting, management meeting for shared resources, working environment committee and employment committee once a year. Share the internal best case for integrating foreign workers.	Rector, Director Administrative Support and Director Academic Support

Objective 5: Increased gender balance in health and social care education

As mentioned in objective 1, several of VID's programme options attract primarily one gender. This gender imbalance in the health and social care programmes at VID reflects a general imbalance in the health and care sector in society. It therefore is not VID's ambition to achieve total gender balance among students within these programme options, but VID must take a conscious approach towards recruitment of the underrepresented gender. The statistics on gender imbalance must be monitored annually, in order to ensure that developments do not take a negative turn, without action being taken. The target in the health and social care programmes is a minimum of 20% male students.

Actions:	Responsible:
Monitor the gender imbalance among students on the different study programmes.	Faculties in collaboration with the Division for Academic and Student Affairs
Assess the need for quotas for men in the health and social care programmes.	Faculties in collaboration with the Division for Academic and Student Affairs
Draw up concrete measures in order to achieve a balanced gender composition.	Faculties
Conscious communication with the underrepresented gender when marketing study programmes.	Division for Communication and Public Relations in collaboration with the faculties