



UiT Norges arktiske universitet

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Action Plan for UiT The Arctic University of Norway 2024-2026



Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1	Inclusive working and learning environments.....	4
1.2	Equality, diversity and inclusion	4
2	Applicable laws, regulations and requirements.....	4
2.1	National guidelines for equality	4
2.2	EU requirements regarding action plans for gender equality	3
3	UiT's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion	4
3.1	Follow-up on the action plan	4
3.2	Revision of action plan	5
4	Measures to ensure gender balance at UiT	5
4.1	Gender balance among employees	5
4.2	Gender balance in education.....	6
5	Measures to promote diversity and inclusion at UiT	6
5.1	Organisational development and leadership.....	6
5.2	Recruitment of employees, career development and skills development.....	7
5.3	Recruitment of students	7
5.4	Integration of employees and students with different backgrounds	7
5.5	Diversity in research and education.....	8
5.6	Safe and inclusive working and learning environment	8
5.7	Openness and societal involvement.....	9

1 Introduction

UiT The Arctic University of Norway's commitment to equality and diversity is reflected in 'Eallju – Developing the High North: UiT's strategy towards 2030'¹, where talent development and diversity are one of three strategic priority areas:

“Students and staff are our most important resources. Consequently, a requirement for succeeding in our social mission is that everyone gets to develop their potential. Our students and staff come from different countries and places, they have different backgrounds and histories, and bring experiences and perspectives that enrich and challenge. UiT will use this diversity to our advantage in creation and co-creation and as a basis for developing leading academic environments.”

To achieve this ambition, it is important that UiT actively promotes equality, diversity and inclusion among staff and students. A focus on equality, diversity and inclusion helps create a fair and inclusive university environment.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are integrated at UiT, which is expressed in Eallju – Developing the High North: UiT's strategy towards 2030:

- **Develop, attract and retain talents.** We will establish measures to facilitate developing the capacity and competence of staff and academic environments. We will break down career barriers, have a comprehensive recruitment policy and systematically develop leadership and employee responsibility.
- **Recruit and equip students for lifelong learning.** We will facilitate mobility, strengthen interaction with external partners and contribute to more young people being attracted to and remaining in the region. We will promote curiosity, participation and responsibility for the future.
- **Prioritise knowledge development and innovative dissemination that promotes diversity.** We will strengthen the participation of students and staff in dialogue and public debate and protect academic freedom of expression. We will have diversity of competence, representation and perspectives.
- **Further develop UiT's working, learning and study environments.** We will have physical, social and digital environments that are stimulating and adapted. We will develop UiT as one university with various campuses and study locations with distinctive qualities.

¹ [UiT's strategy 2022–2030 |](#)

1.1 Inclusive working and learning environments

UiT will develop student and staff expertise and talent, with diversity as a driving force and resource.

The university has employees from different countries and places, with diverse backgrounds and histories. This diversity will be a driving force and resource. UiT actively promotes equality and prevents discrimination. UiT will create and maintain an inclusive and safe working and learning environment where no one experiences discrimination. UiT will have an equal and inclusive working and learning environment where individual employees and students receive strong academic, professional and collegial support and follow-up.

1.2 Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equality involves recognising and promoting equality, equal opportunities and equal rights to participation for all people, regardless of their unique and individual characteristics. Diversity refers to the variation among people, including gender, age, ethnicity, group affiliation, religion, functional diversity, educational level, life experiences, cultural background, work experience, expertise, interests, family situation, experience as a minority, indigenous peoples, national minorities, or belonging to an underrepresented group in a community. Inclusion is about allowing everyone to participate on equal terms and to have a real influence.

By recognising and valuing the diversity among our employees and students, we work together towards a more inclusive and equal society where everyone has the freedom to fully contribute and reach their full potential. When UiT values diversity, these differences become enriching elements, and by being inclusive, we ensure that everyone has the opportunity for full participation and personal, academic and professional development.

2 Applicable laws, regulations and requirements

2.1 National guidelines for equality

Pursuant to the Act relating to equality and a prohibition against discrimination (Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act)², UiT is required to prevent discrimination within the organisation and to ensure

² [Act relating to equality and a prohibition against discrimination](#)

that all employees and students have equal opportunities on a variety of grounds³. The activity duty of public authorities and duty to issue a statement in sections 24 and 26 of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act obligates all public employers to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote equality. Efforts must be made to establish gender balance, especially in leadership positions, and the organisation must report annually on its efforts to establish equality and diversity as an employer. Similar requirements are stipulated in Section 6-2 of the Act relating to universities and university colleges ⁴. The university will work actively and systematically to promote equality and prevent discrimination in all its functions, from recruitment and admission, to education, research, administration and management.

The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act also requires universal design as a prerequisite for equal access to society, as well as adaptation for equal opportunities and participation. UiT has a dedicated action plan for universal design and individual adaptation for students.

2.2 EU requirements regarding action plans for gender equality

From 2022, both the Research Council of Norway and the EU, through Horizon Europe, have required all applicants from research organisations and the public sector to have an action plan for gender equality in order to receive funding. Four compulsory requirements are defined that must be included in such an action plan. In addition, five recommended priority areas have been defined that should be included.

The four compulsory requirements are:

1. The action plan must be adopted by management and publicly available on the institution's website
2. The action plan must refer to earmarked resources for work on gender equality
3. The action plan must include gender-disaggregated data for all job categories and outline how to carry out annual reporting and follow-up

³ Gender, pregnancy, leave in connection with childbirth or adoption, parental leave, ethnicity, religion, life stance, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, and other significant aspects of a person.

⁴ [Act relating to universities and university colleges](#)

4. The action plan must outline how the work is supported through training and skills development.

The recommended priority areas are:

1. Organisational culture and work-life balance
2. Gender balance in management and decision making
3. Gender balance in recruitment and career development
4. Integration of a gender perspective into research and educational content
5. Measures against gender-based violence and sexual harassment

The elements of the EU gender equality requirements are included in this action plan.

3 UiT's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion

The action plan sets the direction for integrated, continuous, and systematic work to promote equality, diversity and inclusion at UiT, in accordance with the activity duty of public authorities and duty to issue a statement in the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, as well as the requirements for a gender equality action plan for research funding from Horizon Europe and the Research Council of Norway.

3.1 Follow-up on the action plan

The action plan is fully established in and supported by UiT's management. Management at all levels is responsible for implementing and ensuring compliance with the action plan. This means that the action plan must play a key role on the agenda of unit and management meetings, as well as in ongoing dialogue with employees. Annual discussions with trade unions about the action plan and the equality, diversity, and inclusion report must be conducted.

The work on equality and diversity must be part of the faculties/units' allocation letter. Managers at all levels must work actively on equality and diversity measures, including recruitment, employee follow-up, working environment and organisational development. Measures to promote equality and diversity must be included in the units' annual plans. It is important to develop and implement measures that are tailored to meet the specific needs of each unit. The development is regularly followed up through existing meeting structures, cf. UiT Business managements. Measures and development at individual units

⁵ [Business management at UiT](#)

will also be a topic in the annual report that is published at the same time as UiT's annual report.

3.2 Revision of action plan

The action plan must be revised by the end of 2026. UiT currently has its own action plan for universal design and individual adaptation for students⁶. These areas are closely linked to diversity and inclusion work, and there are plans to incorporate them into the action plan for diversity, equality and inclusion.

4 Measures to ensure gender balance at UiT

4.1 Gender balance among employees

Goal

UiT will promote gender balance and prevent discrimination based on gender in recruitment and appointments, salary determination and career development for employees and managers. Gender balance is considered to be achieved when at least 40% of one gender is represented. In 2024, women hold 45.9% of senior academic positions, but there is significant variation between different subject areas. For faculties/units where one gender is in the minority, strategies must be developed to improve gender balance. At the institutional level, gender balance should be maintained in tenure-track positions. At all levels, the university will incorporate equality and diversity into its recruitment strategies.

Measures

- Evaluate requirements for search committees in supplementary provisions for appointment and promotion that contribute to gender balance in academic positions.
- Implement recruitment measures in academic communities where there is particularly uneven gender balance among academic employees.
- Use starter packages that may consist of doctoral research fellows, postdoctoral fellows and/or additional operating funds when recruiting to faculties/units where one gender is particularly underrepresented.
- Introduce a mentoring scheme for newly appointed female associate professors, postdoctoral fellows and researchers in units/subject areas where there are few women in senior positions. Here, the Kikut Project at the Faculty of Biosciences, Fisheries and Economics (BFE) can serve as inspiration.

⁶ [Action plan for universal design and individual adaptation for students at UiT](#)

4.2 Gender balance in education

Goal

UiT aims to achieve gender balance in its educational programmes. Gender balance is considered to be achieved when there is at least 40% representation of one gender. At faculties and in programmes of study where one gender is underrepresented, specific measures should be taken to improve gender balance. The university aims for balanced gender representation in the Student Parliament and other student groups and committees. The Students Parliament is encouraged to follow up on this.

Measures

- Implement measures to improve recruitment to programmes of study with less than 25% of students from the underrepresented gender. For example, this can be achieved through marketing campaigns targeting underrepresented groups or by actively and deliberately using relevant role models in recruitment and motivation efforts.
- Establish networks for students of the underrepresented gender in programmes of study with uneven gender balance. Underrepresentation exists when there is less than 40% of one gender.
- Encourage the Student Parliament to work towards gender balance and representation in all groups and committees.

5 Measures to promote diversity and inclusion at UiT

5.1 Organisational development and leadership

Goal

UiT's equality and diversity work must be continuous and systematic. To succeed with equality and diversity, planned and targeted work is required over time. Everyone in the organisation should be familiar with and maintain an awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion. Managers should have a thorough understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Measures

- Identify risks and barriers to equality and diversity among students and employees.
- Map the experiences of UiT employees and students.
- Introduce topics on equality, diversity and inclusion in leadership training and development.
- Introduce diversity recruitment training

- Introduce training in the prevention of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment

5.2 Recruitment of employees, career development and skills development

Goal

UiT will break down career barriers, maintain an integrated recruitment policy and systematically develop leadership and collaboration between employees. UiT will strive to achieve a gender and diversity balance at all levels of the organisation, and will work to increase diversity in leadership positions and permanent academic positions which entail doctoral competence or equivalent. Opportunities for career and skills development will be provided for everyone. UiT will promote working conditions that support a balance between academic career and family life, taking into account different life phases.

Measures

- Seek equality and diversity competence when recruiting managers.
- Training of assessment committees and appointment committees in relation to unconscious biases and the importance of diversity in the recruitment of academic staff.
- Enter into agreements with the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) on the inclusion of persons with disabilities and/or gaps in their CV.
- Implement skills development measures regarding adaptation for persons with disabilities.

5.3 Recruitment of students

Goal

Recruit a diverse range of students.

Measures

- Conduct marketing campaigns that target underrepresented groups in student recruitment
- Prepare information material that reflects the diversity at UiT
- Active use of different role models in recruitment and motivation work

5.4 Integration of employees and students with different backgrounds

Goal

UiT will facilitate the inclusion of students and employees in the working and learning environment, regardless of their background, be it nationality, ethnicity, skin colour, or their social

or cultural background. UiT will ensure that everyone has equal opportunities regarding involvement and participation.

Measures

- Further develop reception routines for foreign employees and students, and arrange an international day/week to promote UiT as an international university.
- Offer employees training in multicultural workplaces – how to lead multicultural working communities with non-discriminatory practices.
- Offer foreign employees an introduction to the main principles of participation in Norwegian working life.
- Offer Norwegian language training to new employees when required, and provide the opportunity to include Norwegian language training in their work schedules.
- Increase knowledge and awareness of gender and sexual diversity among students and employees, for example through courses, workshops or teaching. Increase the number of gender-neutral toilets with the goal of having gender-neutral toilets in every building.

5.5 Diversity in research and education

Goal

Equality and diversity will be an integral part of research and education at UiT.

Measures

- Ensure gender and diversity perspectives are integrated into the implementation of research and education activities.
- Ensure diversity in the representation of perspectives among invited speakers at major events.

5.6 Safe and inclusive working and learning environment

Goal

UiT's working and learning environment must be characterised by openness, safety and inclusion – both as a workplace and a place of study. Employees and students must experience a sense of belonging and have opportunities for active participation and involvement, and the university must have a zero-tolerance policy in relation to bullying, discrimination and harassment. In accordance with the Action plan for universal design and adaptation for

students⁷, UiT will also ensure that as many people as possible, regardless of disability, can access study and employment opportunities at the university. Employees and students also have an individual responsibility to integrate themselves into the working and learning environment.

Measures

- Introduce topics in onboarding discussions with new employees about preventing discrimination, bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment.
- Introduce a review of the ethical guidelines for supervisors and educators in the training of teaching and supervisory staff (basic pedagogical competence, research supervision).
- Introduce topics on preventing exclusion, discrimination and sexual harassment in performance assessment interviews.
- Establish adaptation routines for employees and students with disabilities.
- Prepare easily accessible informational materials related to the prevention of harassment and sexual harassment – both digitally and physically, and in Norwegian and English.
- Further develop whistleblowing procedures and channels, in Norwegian and English, and work to ensure that all employees and students are familiar with the channels.
- Conduct training for managers, employees, employee representatives and safety representatives in the prevention of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment.
- Conduct training in the prevention of sexual harassment for students.

5.7 Openness and societal involvement

Goal

UiT is committed to actively promoting a culture in which both students and employees are engaged participants in societal dialogues and debates, while also maintaining and protecting the critical value of academic freedom of expression. With an open and visible commitment to diversity, UiT aims to be a driving force behind inclusion and understanding in society. This includes prioritised measures to develop knowledge and innovative dissemination that acknowledge the diversity among individuals and groups.⁸

⁷ [Action plan for universal design and individual adaptation for students at UiT](#)

⁸ See also UiT's Communication Platform: <https://uit.no/om/kommunikasjonsplattform>

Measures

- Introduce the deliberate use of language and symbols in order to achieve an inclusive diversity in communication and information.
- Strengthen diversity in various internal and external events, and in dissemination work.
- Mark important dates such as Sámi National Day, International Women's Day, Kven People's Day, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, World Mental Health Day, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and participate in and organize PRIDE events at all UiT campuses.

