

Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) 2026– 2030

Introduction

The overarching strategy of **Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) for the period 2023–2030**¹ sets out clear ambitions and concrete objectives for the institution, in which **fundamental human rights values and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are central**. These are operationalised through a range of areas and initiatives, for example leadership, competence development, research and education.

The Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity is intended to contribute to ensuring that HVL meets the future as an institution founded on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Particular emphasis is placed on Goal No. 4 (Quality Education), No. 5 (Gender Equality), No. 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and No. 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

The Research Council of Norway and the European Commission have introduced requirements for organisational-level gender equality plans (“Gender Equality Plans”). These requirements apply to applicants and partners in national calls and calls under Horizon Europe.

In order to ensure that equality, inclusion and diversity are maintained, safeguarded and further developed, HVL – as a state-owned public organisation and employer, an academic institution and a societal actor – shall comply with applicable legislation and relevant ethical guidelines, including:

- the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act²,
- the Working Environment Act³,
- the Universities and University Colleges Act⁴,
- the Planning and Building Act⁵.

In addition, HVL shall not only maintain zero tolerance for discrimination, bullying and harassment (including sexual harassment), but shall also actively contribute to a more inclusive, sustainable and diverse society. This societal responsibility is particularly important at a time when equality, inclusion and diversity are under threat within academic institutions in several countries.

- **Equality** and the prohibition of discrimination are defined in the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act. HVL shall promote equality, equal dignity, equal opportunities and equal rights among staff and students, and prevent discrimination on the grounds of gender, pregnancy, leave in connection with childbirth or adoption, caregiving responsibilities, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, and other significant personal characteristics.
- **Inclusion** is explicitly stated as one of the three core values in HVL’s strategy for 2023–2030. This may be understood to mean that all students and employees of HVL, as well as partners and visitors, shall be met “with respect and consideration”⁶.
- **Diversity** in academia is not a clearly defined concept and is often limited to ethnic diversity or social background. In this action plan, diversity shall not be understood solely in terms of ethnicity, but also in

¹ <https://www.hvl.no/om/strategi-2023-2030/>

² <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2017-06-16-51>

³ <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2005-06-17-62;>

⁴ <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2024-03-08-9>

⁵ <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2008-06-27-71;>

⁶ <https://www.hvl.no/om/strategi-2023-2030/>

relation to gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and other significant personal characteristics. The diversity perspective is central both to representation and participation, and to perspectives relating to education, research and innovation.

Equality, inclusion and diversity are values, resources and part of the everyday work of staff and students, and shall be supported and put into practice.

About the Action Plan

HVL has established a Council for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (RLMI)⁷. The purpose of the Council is to promote genuine equality, inclusion and diversity at HVL. The Council supports the leadership and monitors the implementation of work related to equality, inclusion and diversity, and shall be alert to circumstances that may lead to breaches of legislation and institutional guidelines⁸.

RLMI shall also prepare an Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity, which is adopted by the Rector. The present plan constitutes a revision of an earlier action plan (2021–2025). It shall meet the following four requirements:

- identify dedicated resources for work on equality;
- encourage annual reporting and follow-up;
- support training and competence development;
- be publicly accessible on the institution's website.

Anchoring and ownership of the work across the leadership of HVL are prerequisites for achieving the objectives of the plan.

Follow-up, reporting and evaluation of the plan shall be conducted annually. RLMI may propose amendments to the plan, its objectives and its measures on the basis of available information and data arising from the work of implementing the plan.

The action plan is structured as a table consisting of three parts:

Part 1 concerns **Organisation and Leadership**.

Part 2 concerns **Knowledge, Competence Development and Engagement**.

Part 3 focuses on **Education, Research and Innovation**.

Managers of the relevant units within the faculties and the central administration are responsible for the measures set out in the action plan. Managers may further delegate the operational tasks within their units. The person responsible for the measures is also responsible for how the measures are followed up and assessed. Responsible managers shall ensure the participation of employees and close cooperation with employee representatives and the health and safety service in the development of the measures.

The faculties, institutes and administrative units may have different contexts and challenges related to equality, inclusion and diversity. The action plan therefore places strong emphasis on local measures to be further developed by the faculties, institutes and the administrative units, so that the intentions of HVL's action plan can be made concrete and adapted to different needs and contexts.

At the same time, there is a need for an intersectional approach⁹, in which experienced barriers, prejudices and privileges may be interrelated, and the action plan shall reflect this complexity.

⁷ <https://www.hvl.no/om/utval/radet-for-likestilling-mangfald-og-inkluderings/>

⁸ <https://www.hvl.no/om/sentrale-dokument/reglar/>

⁹ The concept of intersectionality refers to how social categories such as [gender](#), [race](#), [ethnicity](#), [religion](#), [social class](#), sexual orientation and [disability](#) may interact and influence individuals' living conditions [Intersectionality – Store norske leksikon](#)

Objectives and Measures

Organisation and Leadership			
Objectives	Relevant measures to support the objectives	Responsible	Timeframe for implementation
All staff and students shall receive information about HVL's work on equality, inclusion and diversity.	1. Prepare and keep up to date information materials for new employees, students and managers.	1. Division of Human Resources and Pro-Rector for Education.	1. Update completed before August 2026.
	2. Clarify equality, inclusion and diversity in the revision of HVL's strategy.	2. Rector.	2. 2026.
	3. Include equality, inclusion and diversity as a topic in programmes for the training of managers and employees. The training shall be evidence-based and cover, among other things, unconscious bias.	3. Division of Human Resources.	3. Ongoing.
All faculties, administrative units, and the Student Parliament shall develop and implement local measures for equality, inclusion and diversity.	4. a) The faculties, administrative units and the Student Parliament identify areas for long-term, strategic local measures and implement specific measures.	4. Deans, Pro-Rectors and Directors.	4. a) Ongoing.
	b) The status of local measures is reported to the HVL leadership and the Council for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.		b) Annually, from 2027.
HVL shall work systematically and in the long term to recruit and retain more students and employees with a minority background, disabilities and gaps in their CVs.	5. Develop facilitation and support functions for students with a minority background.	5. Pro-Rector for Education.	6. Ongoing.
	Staff recruitment:		
	6. Incorporate how consideration of equality, inclusion and diversity is addressed in the routines for staff recruitment.	7. Division of Human Resources.	6. Update during 2026.

	7. Adopt an active approach to recruiting and including employees with a minority background, disabilities and gaps in their CVs.	8. Managers with recruitment authority.	7. Ongoing.
	8. Employees are offered Norwegian language training and an introduction to Norwegian culture and working life in accordance with HVL's language policy guidelines .	9. Division of Human Resources and the Personnel Manager.	8. Ongoing.
	9. Organise regular language cafés on the different campuses.	10. Library, Division of External Relations – Working Life orientation and Lifelong Learning.	9. To be planned for the start of the semester.
	10. The instruments in HVL's salary policy shall be actively used to ensure that salary placement is in accordance with the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act.	11. Division of Human Resources, managers with recruitment authority.	10. Ongoing, during recruitment and salary negotiations.
	Student Recruitment:		
	11. Conduct active recruitment work in upper secondary schools and other arenas where we can reach pupils with a minority background.	12. Pro-Rector for Innovation and Regional Development and Pro-Rector for Education.	11. Ongoing.
	12. Investigate and assess whether HVL can receive students supported by “Students at Risk”.	13. Director of Organisation and Pro-Rector for Education.	12. During 2026.
	Staff recruitment:		

Targeted measures shall be implemented to recruit and retain a gender balance among staff and students at HVL.	13. Incorporate the requirement that consideration of equality shall form part of the recruitment procedures.	14. Division of Human Resources.	13. Update during 2026, ongoing.
	Student recruitment:		
	14. Active use of female and male students as role models to inspire and motivate students to choose study programmes where their gender is underrepresented.	15. Pro-Rector for Education, Division of Communications.	14. Ongoing.
	15. Prepare and analyse documentation on the gender distribution in the various units, academic environments and study programmes in order to introduce targeted measures where needed.	16. Pro-Rector for Education and Director of Organisation.	15. Annually.
HVL shall maintain an active life-phase policy (in accordance with the <i>State Personnel Handbook</i>) to support employees throughout the entire course of their careers.	16. All managers with personnel responsibility shall implement the life-phase policy in the organisation and distribution of work for all permanent and temporary employees.	17. Managers with personnel responsibility.	16. Ongoing.
HVL shall maintain zero tolerance for discrimination, racism, harassment and bullying, both in academic and social activities.	17. Quality assure and, where necessary, revise procedures for the handling and prevention of harassment: bullying and harassment for employees and students.	18. Owners of the procedures.	17. As required or during planned revision.
	18. Include the topic of equality, inclusion and diversity in staff meetings within the units.	19. Managers with personnel responsibility.	18. From August 2026.
	19. Present an annual item on equality, inclusion and diversity in the Student Parliament.	20. The Student Parliament.	19. Annually.
	20. Map and develop effective measures to address discrimination, racism, harassment and bullying of employees and students.	21. Division of Human Resources, Pro-Rector	20. Ongoing.

		for Education and the Student Parliament.	
HVL shall meet the requirements established for universal design of the physical and digital working and learning environment.	21. Document how HVL meets the requirements relating to: a) physical universal design and b) digital universal design on all platforms.	22. a) Division of Property Management b) Department of Information Technology and Services, Division of Communications and Division of Academic Development (ALU).	21. In HVL's annual report.
	22. Build competence in universal design among those who design the physical and digital working and learning environment.	23. Division of Communications and Division of Academic Development (ALU).	22.Ongoing.
	23. The Action Plan for an Inclusive Learning Environment and Universal Design shall be better known within the organisation and followed up.	24. Pro-Rector for Education and the Learning Environment Committee	23. Ongoing.
HVL shall ensure diversity in the representation of its councils and committees.	24. Map the status of our councils and committees and implement measures where necessary.	25. Director of Organisation.	24. Ongoing.

	25. A visual profile on digital platforms highlighting the diversity within the organisation.	26. Division of Communications.	25. Ongoing.
Knowledge, Competence Development and Engagement			
Objectives	Measures	Responsible	Timeframe for implementation
Facilitate, make visible and promote events related to equality, inclusion and diversity across all campuses.	26. Coordinate the marking of commemorative days (e.g. 8 March, Pride and International Day, etc.) across all campuses.	27. Council for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity in cooperation with Deans, Pro-Rectors and Directors.	26. Ongoing.
Annual funds shall be allocated for competence development and dissemination related to equality, inclusion and diversity.	27. During the plan period, an HVL conference shall be organised addressing work on equality, inclusion and diversity.	28. Rector, RLMI, Division of External Relations – Working Life orientation and Lifelong Learning (events)	27. During the period 2026–2030.
	28. The Rector awards a prize to a unit, environment, group or person (employees and/or students) who has made a particular contribution to equality, inclusion and diversity.	29. Council for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity and the Rector.	28. In accordance with the adopted interval for the award.
	29. HVL allocates dedicated competence funds for work on equality, inclusion and diversity.	30. Director of Organisation.	29. Annually.
HVL shall actively work to create broad engagement among staff and students on topics related to equality, inclusion and diversity,	30. Motivate and actively work to encourage students and staff to participate in the dissemination of topics related to equality, inclusion and diversity on HVL websites and in the media.	31. Division of Communications.	30. Ongoing.

and facilitate discussions on challenges related to these topics.	31. Organise courses and seminars and disseminate resources to increase knowledge of and resources for work on equality, inclusion and diversity.	32. Division of Human Resources and the Council for Equality, Inclusion and Diversity.	31. From 2027.
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Education, Research and Innovation

Objectives	Measures	Responsible	Timeframe for implementation
HVL shall safeguard equality, inclusion and diversity perspectives in education, research and innovation.	32. Promote diversity in curricula and use tools such as “Diversity Scan” where necessary.	33. Library.	32. In 2026.
	33. Include equality, inclusion and diversity perspectives in research dissemination and research communication.	34. The faculties, Division of Communications.	33. Ongoing.
	34. Include equality, inclusion and diversity perspectives in the PhD programmes and in supervision practices for doctoral candidates.	35. Pro-Rector for Research.	34. Ongoing.
	35. Develop courses on the integration of equality, inclusion and diversity in research and innovation.	36. Pro-Rector for Research, Pro-Rector for Innovation and Regional Development.	35. From 2026.
Employees and students shall develop, use or research artificial intelligence in a responsible, critical and inclusive manner, with particular focus on issues related to equality, inclusion and diversity such as stereotypes, bias and inequality.	36. Disseminate knowledge and critical awareness of the use of AI through courses, research, development and innovation work.	37. Deans, Pro-Rector for Innovation and Regional Development and Pro-Rector for Education.	36. Ongoing.

The university shall highlight, recognise and promote equality, inclusion and diversity as fundamental values and competences for working life.	37. Equality, inclusion and diversity perspectives shall be included in international knowledge cooperation as well as in exchange programmes for students and employees.	38. The faculties, Pro-Rector for Education, Deans and Vice-Deans for Education.	37. Ongoing.
	38. Intersectional approaches and gender dimensions shall be safeguarded in research, development and innovation.	39. Deans, Pro-Rector for Research.	38. Ongoing.