Action plan for gender balance, equality, and diversity 2022 - 2025

Department of Informatics

ACTION PLAN 2022 - 2025 // Department of Informatics. Version 2.0 (28.06.2024)

UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN

THE WORKING GROUP

As part of the GenderAct project at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, the department prepared a "Local action plan for work with gender balance, equality, and diversity" (hereinafter referred to as the "Action Plan").

The working group was originally composed of head of department Inge Jonassen (head), head of administration Linda Vagtskjold, deputy and head of teaching Fredrik Manne, associate professor Crystal Chang Din, associate professor Torstein Strømme and Professor Lilya Budaghyan. Professor Noeska Smit joined the group from February 2024. We also aim to invite a PhD student and a bachelor/master student to join the group effective from autumn 2024.

The working group's mandate
- *The working group must prepare the Action Plan by the faculty's deadline of 01/11/2022.*
- *The group will have a primary focus on gender balance, equality and diversity, but will also see its work in the context of general conditions relating to the working environment, career development and recruitment of both employees and students.*
- *In its work, the group must place emphasis on informing other staff and students about its work and be open for input from them, for example through open meetings or surveys. This will in turn increase support for the measures the group comes up with in the Action Plan.*
- *The group will also give input to the departments' participation in subject evaluation directed by the Research Council of Norway in 2023 and especially to the department's self-evaluation.*
- *The group will further play a coordinating role in the implementation and evaluation of measures and propose adjustments to these, possibly also introduction of new measures during the period. Towards the end of the period, the group will write a report which summarizes what has been done, results and gives its input on how the work should be followed up in the future.*
- *The group will be active until July 2025 (out of the current head of department's term of office).*

Ahead of producing the first edition of the plan, the working group had four internal meetings, participated in a two-day workshop together with the GenderAct project and the other pilot departments, and had two meetings with GenderAct's professional resource team, Professors Siri Øyslebø Sørensen and Eva Amundsdotter.

During 2023, a survey was designed and conducted. The survey results were used to adjust the plan to form the current version 2.0 that focuses on measures to be performed or initiated during 2024 and on.

DEFINITION AND PROCESS

The working group`s proposal was based on data from our own department`s gender statistics, as well as assumptions and indicators the GenderAct work has provided until then. The working group included additional local data collection in the action plan point A-3. The survey questions were prepared as part of the department HSE-seminar in spring 2023, and the survey was conducted in autumn 2023. As part of the department HSE-seminar in spring 2024, 12 groups worked on inputs to adjust the sections A-E and add a section D in the plan. Version 2.0 of the action plan includes survey data analysis and updated measures/activities.

The main focus of the actions plan's first version was on gender balance. Diversity has many aspects, such as culture, religion, LGBT+ etc. We will keep these aspects, as much as possible, in mind when measures are planned and implemented. In addition, we hope that the work focused on gender (balance) will be useful in addressing more aspects of diversity in the next round. In this version 2.0, we also include a section F with some measures/actions related to cultural diversity based on the results in the local survey.
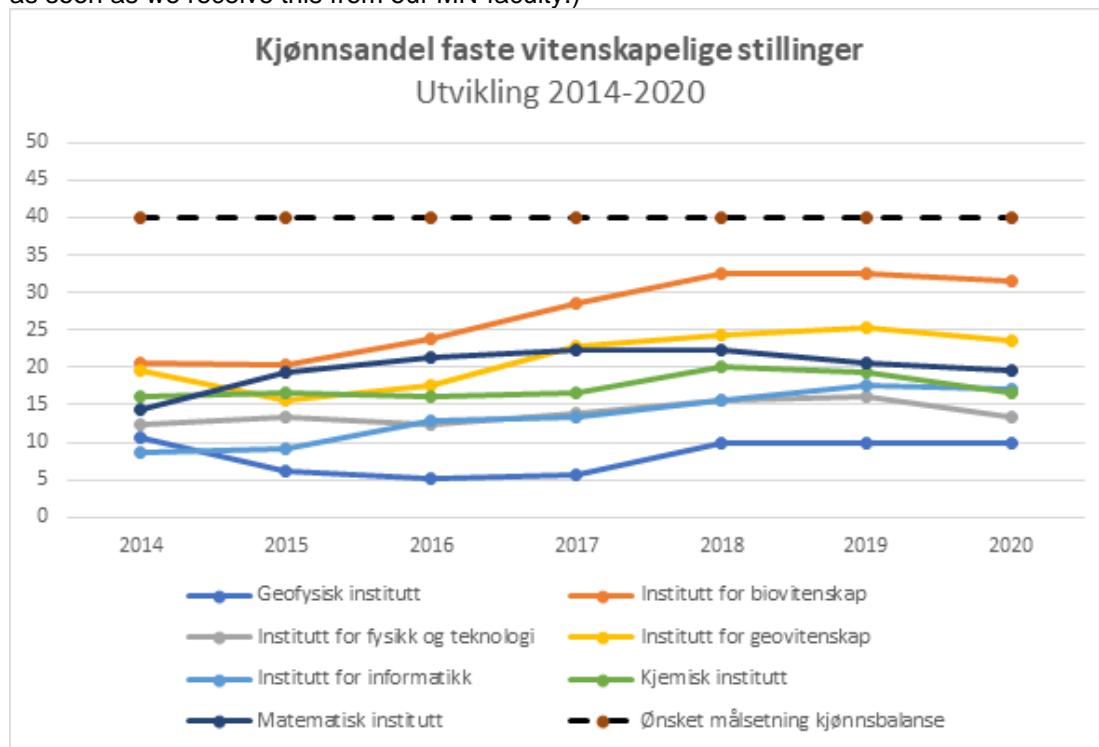
When it comes to gender balance, the challenges for scientific positions are partly different from those for technical/administrative positions. The focus of the action plan is initially on scientific positions where we have a clear imbalance in disfavor of women.
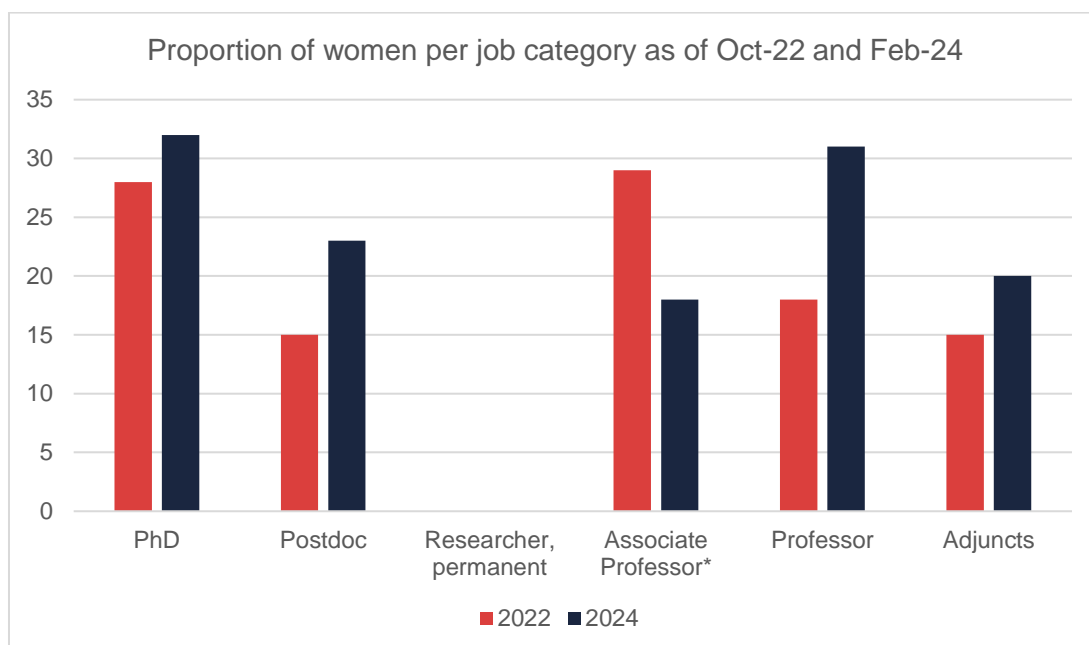
During the term of office, the action plan will be updated annually based on updated data and experiences with the measures as they are implemented. A revised Action Plan will be presented to the Department Council annually at its September meeting. For 2023, we chose to postpone the revision to the June 2024 Department Council meeting to be able to include the data analyses from the local survey as well as the inputs from the group work at the department gathering in April 2024..

RELEVANT DATA

Statistics gender balance

Gender ratio of permanent academic positions 2014-2020 (will be replaced with more recent statistics as soon as we receive this from our MN-faculty.)

Kjønnsandel faste vitenskapelige stillinger
Utvikling 2014-2020

Proportion of women per job category as of Oct-22 and Feb-24

*incl. tenure track

Students, Bachelor, proportion of women:

Avdelingsnavn	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Andel
Institutt for informatikk	14%	15%	14%	14%	14%	18%	23%	23%	Klar ubalanse

Students, Master, proportion of women:

Avdelingsnavn	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Andel
Institutt for informatikk	12%	16%	19%	16%	26%	22%	26%	20%	Klar ubalanse

All students, proportion of women:

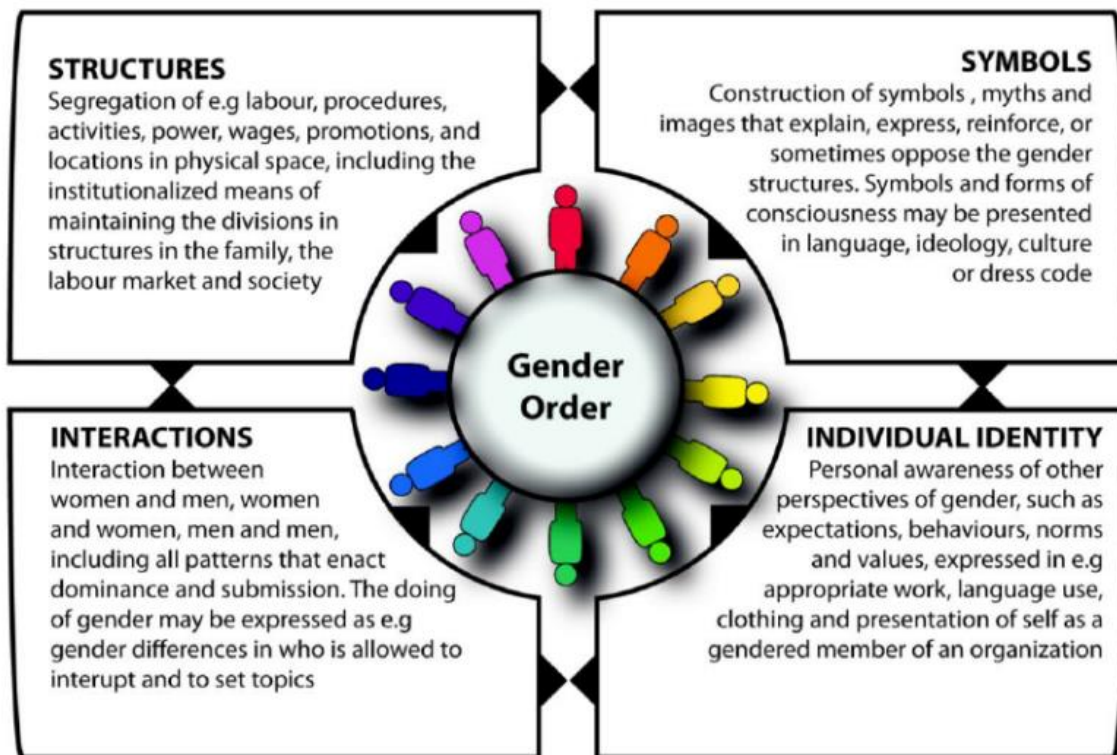| Avdelingsnavn	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Andel
Institutt for informatikk	13%	15%	15%	15%	17%	19%	24%	22%	Klar ubalanse

The GenderAct Project

The work on the action plan benefits from the work done in the GenderAct project so far. Crystal Chang Din and Inge Jonassen have also participated respectively in the GenderAct leader and top researcher programs, and the working group has also had conversations with professors Siri Sørensen and Eva Amundsdotter related to the project. We are also building on findings made in the FRONT project at the University of Oslo.

Based on this, some preliminary assumptions have been formulated about issues that the researchers in the GenderAct project believe to have observed at the MN faculty, but more research remains before anything more concrete will be presented.

At our department, the topic has so far been on the agenda once in a plenary session at the department gathering at Voss in October 2021. Moreover, the action plan has been briefly discussed in a group contact meeting and approved in a Department Council one hour meeting. The experience so far is that this is a sensitive topic, and it has not yet proven fruitful to start with findings that apply to the MNT fields in general. For us at the department to recognize ourselves and to acknowledge the preconditions for an action plan, we needed to collect relevant data locally at the department.

The figure on next page has been central throughout the work with GenderAct. Factors that affect "Gender order" are divided into the four main groups of structure, symbols, interactions, and individual identity. To move the culture in a good direction, we should take measures that affect all these areas.

STRUCTURES
Segregation of e.g labour, procedures, activities, power, wages, promotions, and locations in physical space, including the institutionalized means of maintaining the divisions in structures in the family, the labour market and society

SYMBOLS
Construction of symbols, myths and images that explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose the gender structures. Symbols and forms of consciousness may be presented in language, ideology, culture or dress code

Gender Order

INTERACTIONS
Interaction between women and men, women and women, men and men, including all patterns that enact dominance and submission. The doing of gender may be expressed as e.g gender differences in who is allowed to interupt and to set topics

INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY
Personal awareness of other perspectives of gender, such as expectations, behaviours, norms and values, expressed in e.g appropriate work, language use, clothing and presentation of self as a gendered member of an organization

The figure is borrowed from this paper:
http://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:1003112/FULLTEXT01.pdf

The FRONT project at the University of Oslo Likestilling i akademia – fra kunnskap til endring | Nordic Open Access Scholarly Publishing
The survey performed in context of the FRONT project shows, among other things, that women experience negative social treatment three times as often as men, professional devaluation twice as often and professional isolation one and a half times as often. FRONT points out that there are systemic challenges with gender balance in academia and that women experience an accumulated disadvantage compared to men. Together, this creates obstacles that make it more difficult for women than men to achieve their career ambitions.

The Department of Informatics local survey from September 2023
The survey questions were prepared as part of the department HSE-seminar in spring 2023, and the survey was conducted in the autumn of 2023. The response rate was 62,5% which we consider a fair rate, at least compared with previous surveys within the ARK (26% in both rounds)

We gathered demographic data on gender, age, position and region. In addition, the survey included questions organized in the following sections:
- Inclusion and organization of work
- Inclusion/sense of belonging in the psychosocial working environment both at group and department levels
- Gender equality – people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities
- Equality at a multicultural workplace
- Harassment and bullying

Each section included 5-6 questions, among them one open ended.

Below we summarize some of the findings from the survey. First, we present demographic information gathered from survey participants (note that numbers are number of responses in each category):
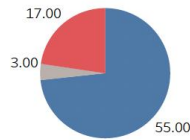
Region
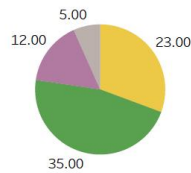
What region of origin do you identify the most with?
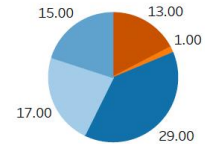Europe or North.. ■ Nordic countries ■ Outside Europe .. ■ Prefer not to an..

Age
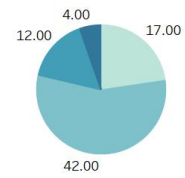
Age (in years)
■ < 30   ■ 30 -45   ■ 46 -60   ■ > 60

Gender

Gender
■ man   ■ woman
■ non-binary pref..

Position

Position
■ Administration   ■ Associate profe..   ■ Postdoc/resear..
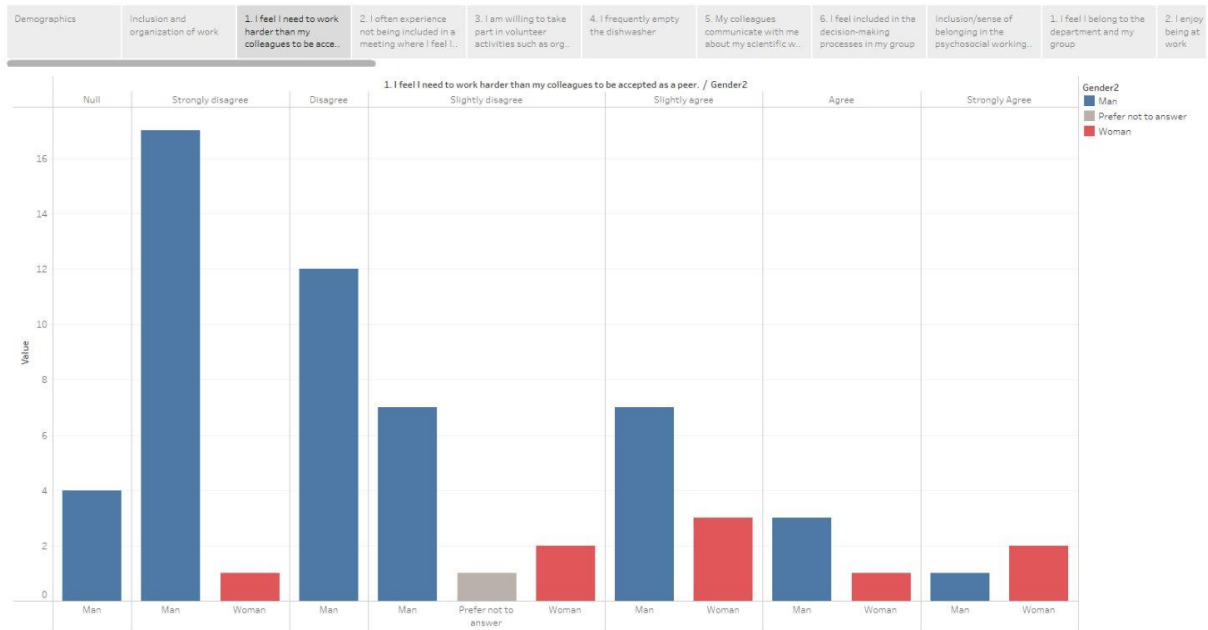■ Tech/Engineer   ■ PhD candidate

As 8 out of the 17 female respondent belongs to the Administration, we chose to exclude the Administration respondents in most of the results. We also exclude the Tech/Engineer group, due to only one respondent. Each figure will be marked with including/excluding admin and tech.

Next, we summarize the responses to the statement "I enjoy being at work" (possible responses for this and also for the following questions: Prefer not to answer, Strongly disagree, Disagree, Slightly disagree, Slightly agree, Agree, Strongly agree), blue bars for men, red for women, grey for non-binary/prefer not to say. The bottom panel shows the responses to the statement "I feel I need to work harder than my colleagues to be accepted as a peer".
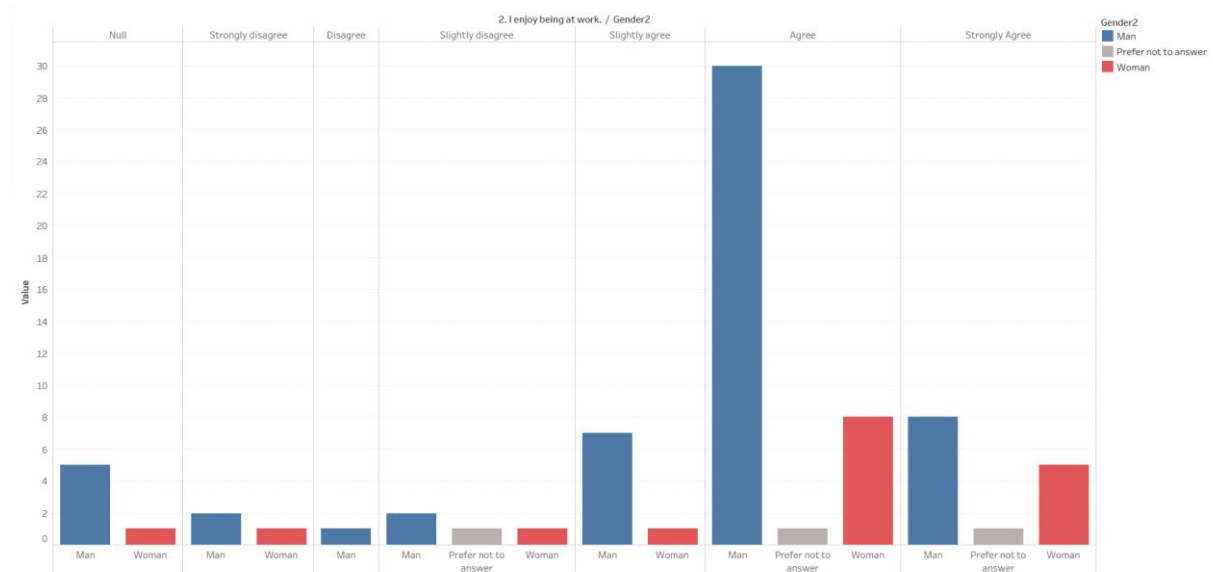
Including Admin&Tech
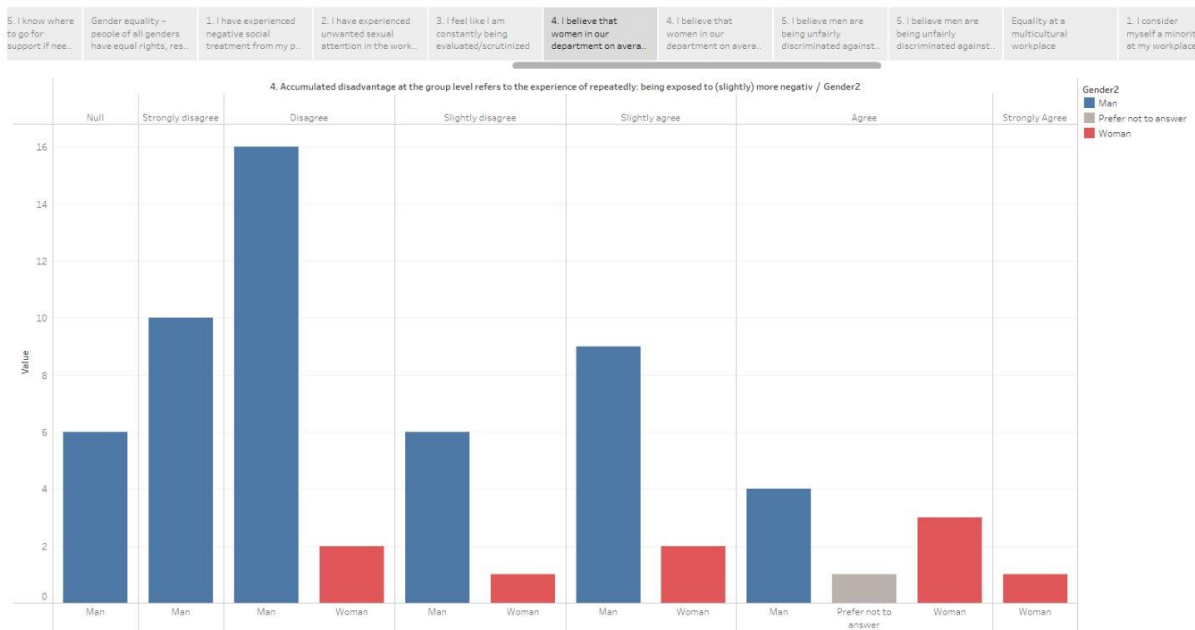
Survey Results

Excluding Admin/Tech

While most respondents enjoy being at work (with little gender difference, top panel), a higher proportion of women feel they have to work harder than their male colleagues (bottom panel).

Next, we include two questions related to gender equality, both excluding admin/tech. The top panel shows the responses to the question "Accumulated disadvantage at the group level refers to the experience of repeatedly: being exposed to (slightly) more negative social treatment ("microagressions"), or being (slightly) unfairly evaluated, or being assigned tasks of (slightly) less merit compared to their counterparts. "I believe that women in our department on average accumulate a larger disadvantage than men."
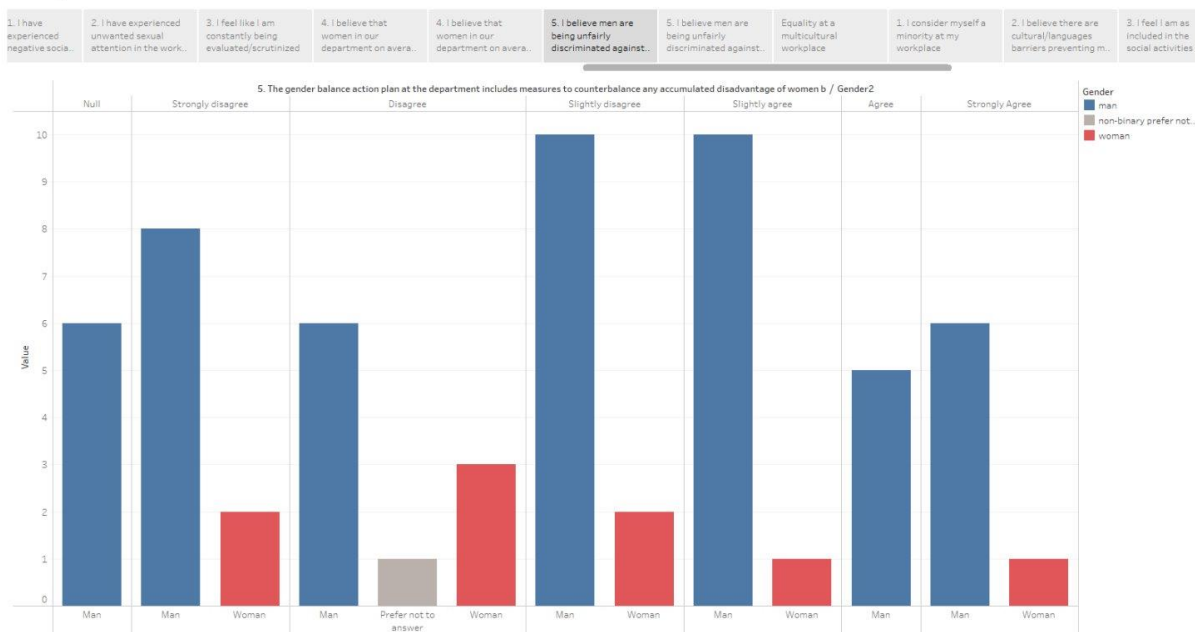
The bottom panel shows the responses to the statement "The gender balance action plan at the department includes measures to counterbalance any accumulated disadvantage of women by applying moderate gender quotation. This entails that women should be prioritized higher in cases when two or more job applicants are judged to be equally well qualified for a position.
"I believe men are being unfairly discriminated against through moderate gender quotation."

Excluding Admin/Tech

Excluding Admin/Tech

The top panel shows that the majority of men (32 out of 46 taking a position) disagree that women on average accumulate a larger disadvantage than men. In addition, the bottom panel shows that there is significant large group of 21 men that think men are unfairly discriminated against through moderate gender quotation whereas 30 men disagree. Two women think men are unfairly discriminated against whereas 7 women disagree.
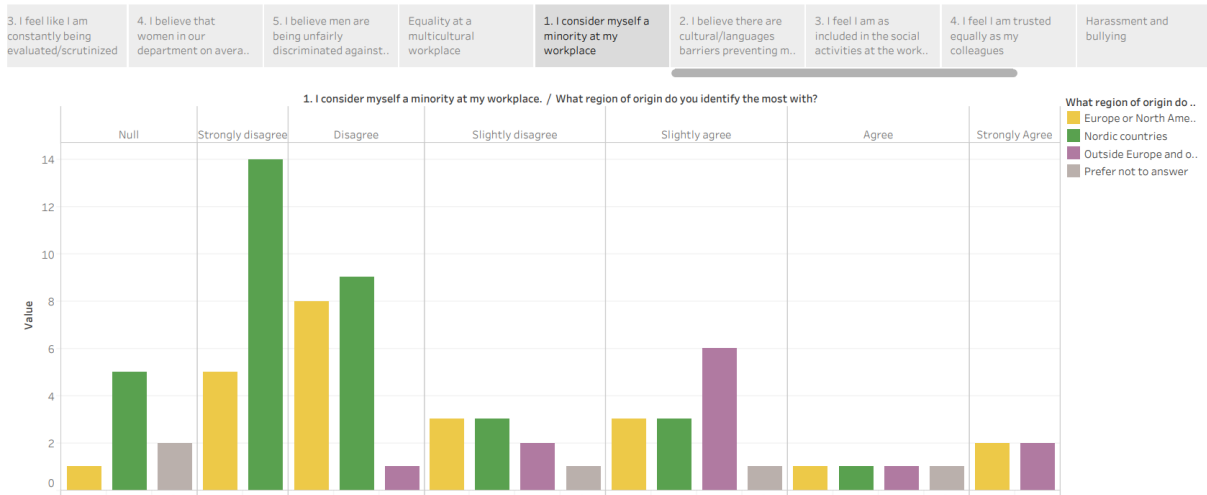
There is extensive research showing that women in academia experience larger accumulated disadvantages (including from the matnat faculty at UiO). Measures to perform any form of quotation will be perceived as unfair unless the basis for the quotation is well documented and the quotation is explained in this context.

> *Fra Henningsen og Liestøl: «Likestilling i akademia*
> *Er eksellense for menn og Grand Challenges for kvinner?»:*

Det er vanskelig å se hvordan dette med dagens kjønnsfordeling i utdanningssystemet kan oppnås uten kraftige kvoteringsliknende tiltak.9 Kvotering kan etter vår oppfatning være hensiktsmessig når det bidrar til å bryte ned barrierer eller motvirke kameraderi – og når det eksplisitt italesettes på denne måten. Men det er et problematisk virkemiddel i et meritokratisøkende forskningssystem som fastholder at en alltid ansetter etter kvalitet. I dag synes det å være skapt et klart inntrykk av at kvinner «hjelpes» i det akademiske system på grunn av synlige, men ubetydelige kvoteringsliknende tiltak. De langt sterkere og motsatt virkende strukturelle og kulturelle barrierer for kvinner forblir usynlige. Den siste forskingsmeldingen uttaler seg ikke om ønsket aggregeringsnivå for kjønnsbalanse – men en debatt og avklaring rundt hva en ønsker å oppnå er viktig for å ledes mot riktige virkemidler. Det kan her anføres at den forrige forskingsmeldingens hovedtiltak var et kvoteringsliknende tiltak – som en evalueringsrapport nå foreslår nedlagt (Proba, 2013).

The survey also gives us insights on multicultural and on psychosociological aspects. The data shows very clear that staff from outside Europe and North America to a larger extent consider themselves as a minority at the workplace and believe that cultural/language barriers are preventing them from acquiring information about labor rights and other opportunities. On the positive side, close to 100% of them feel that they are included in the social activities at the workplace as their colleagues and are trusted equally as their colleagues.

Including Admin&Tech
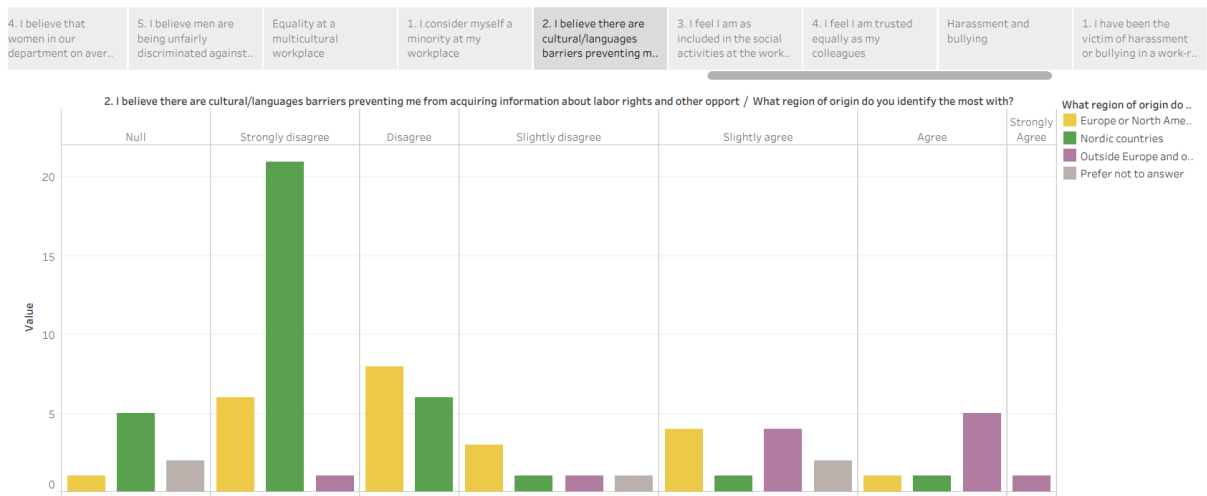
Including Admin&Tech

From the inputs in the open-ended question, we learn that many consider our multicultural working environment as positive and enjoyable. This quote is quite representative for the inputs: *"It is very nice,*

especially socially. It is a bit challenging sometimes because we can be so different that it can take some time to collaborate efficiently, but this is to me more of a growth opportunity than a problem."

GOAL AND PURPOSE

The measures in the Action Plan aim to lead to an improved gender balance at the Department of Informatics in the long term. Just as important as improved statistics is the goal of improving conditions for the women who already work and study at our department. We want them to experience that we are actively working to reduce the accumulated disadvantages they have as women in the MNT subjects.

In sum, we want to achieve a good and inclusive working environment for everyone.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURES

In the following, we list 6 effort areas A-F with target formulations and associated measures, main activities, person responsible, time and status. The person responsible and the time frame have not yet been filled in for all the measures, but we will work on this further when planning the details.

Some of the measures are continuations of measures that we had already introduced in the department before the work on the Action Plan started. Examples of this are initiatives in recruitment (for example search committees), women's network meetings and girls' lunches for the students.

From the data analysis in the survey's section "Equality at a multicultural workplace" we add an area F in the action plan, valid from this version 2.0.

AREAS OF EFFORT FOR IMPROVED GENDER BALANCE, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FOR THE PERIOD 2022-2025

A. Knowledge and anchoring to ensure that all employees are aware of the challenges related to gender balance, equality and diversity and take this into account in formal and informal processes and activities at the department.			
Measures	Main activities	**Responsible and timeline**	**Status**
1. Anchoring in management – Gender aware leadership	Regular topic in the Department Council (the plan will be revised in the September meetings), the group contact meetings and other formal meetings.	Inge, Linda, all in management roles	Ongoing
2. Increased focus and knowledge of the topic among all employees Recognition on the collective level.	• Regular topic in the newsletter • Topic at HSE seminar • Theme in smaller groups and network groups: e.g. in the research groups, the administration, the PhD network and the postdoctoral network For note: specific examples that staff at the department can relate to will be an effective tool for increased understanding/ anchoring.	Inge Inge, Linda All leaders	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
3. Obtain local survey data with the main theme sense of belonging across gender and culture.	Prepare a survey. As the developed survey addressed sensitive topics, we decided to send it out via email instead of collecting answers via meetings. Present the survey results at Solstrand gathering April 2024. Group work: with reference to the results from our local survey, - discuss the action plan's measures and suggest updates of the actions: adjustments or removal of existing actions and additional actions. The working group finalizes the updates for the action plan version 2.0.	Working group Voss department gathering 2023 Solstrand department gathering Working group	Done Done Done
4. Present and encourage women in the target groups to participate in relevant development programs.	Information about the offers and individual calls. Raised as a separate topic in employee appraisal interviews. Examples of such programs are Momentum, UIB FRAM and offers under the auspices of the GenderAct project.	Inge Stefanie	Ongoing
5. Highlight/emphasize that "accumulated disadvantage" makes compensatory measures for women a necessity	• Emphasize that all measures which viewed in isolation may appear to favor women, are about equalizing the accumulated disadvantage for woman in science. Special measures targeting women are about creating equal opportunities and are intended to compensate for accumulated disadvantages. • Give precise information that specifies and makes clear that only moderate gender quota practices" applies in relation to recruitment processes and project allocation - radical quotation will not be applicable. Ensure that there is no room for the interpretation "you were hired solely because you are a woman". • The survey shows that there are varied opinions in the staff concerning whether women experience accumulated disadvantages – and therefore quotation measures may be counterproductive. More work needs to be done here. We aim to organize dedicated department seminars that highlight this theme and to readdress this at the department retreat 2025	All ambassadors within this issue Leadership, all Leadership, working group	Ongoing Ongoing
6. Create/initiate a beneficial/positive network among	Continue to organize annual seminars for female employees and students which aim to provide mutual support, an environment	Noeska Linda	October

women at the department	where participants can speak freely, present their suggestions and proposals, learn from each other's experiences. Women's lunch twice per semester.	Susanna, Kine	Ongoing
7. Annual department seminars to discuss the subject of equality	During the department's Thursday seminar series. Suggestion: invite Sehoya Cotner to talk about STEM	Leadership	Not yet started

B. Good, safe, and inclusive working environment. A working environment that is good for everyone also promotes equality and equal opportunities			
Measures	**Main activities**	**Responsible and timeline**	**Status**
1. Formulate a code of conduct for an inclusive work environment	Request input from all groups + admin through group contacts. Write a draft. Gather for discussion and finalization of document. The Code of conduct should summarize what is acceptable and/or common behavior at the workplace. The main focus should be on what to do, not what to not do. Some things that could be contained in the CoC: • Description of cultural differences, and what is acceptable behavior and/or the common norm in Norway • General habits (cleaning up after yourself, emptying dishwasher, refilling printer paper, ...) • General courtesy (e.g. saying hello to people) • Language habits (English as main language, but opportunities to speak Norwegian are available) • Who to contact in case of questions, and what to do in case of noticing unacceptable behavior? • General unacceptable behavior (bullying, (sexual) harassment, ...) Make the code of conduct a "do-avis" / toilet wall newspaper	TBD	Not yet started
2. The local balance work is linked to the ongoing systematic HSE working environment measures	Include relevant topics on gender balance in the systematic HSE work at the department, for example for HMS seminars, women's network seminars, etc.	Inge, Linda, VO	Ongoing
3. Buddy-system for new employees within the groups	Groups assigns the newcomer a buddy within the group Admin/HR asks the group contact who is the newcomers buddy – increases the chance that it will actually happen.	Group contacts Karoline/ Linda	Not yet started

C. More equal opportunities in connection with recruitment, career development and assignment of tasks. Compensating for accumulated disadvantages for women			
Measures	Main activites	Responsible and timeline	Status
1. Recruitment	Follow measures for recruitment processes in the faculty's Handbook for local work on gender balance: a) Read through announcement drafts with gender perspective in mind b) Use search committees c) Gender balance in employment committees and interview groups d) All committees must complete the e-learning course before getting started e) During interviews, emphasize how candidates have contributed to inclusion and a good working environment Continue to largely use entry-level /tenure track positions for new recruitment.	 Inge Inge Leadership HR Karoline Leadership	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Initiated? Ongoing Trying

Measures	Main activities	Responsible and timeline	Status
	Recruit women for adjunct professor positions to a greater extent. Good career planning / follow-up of our "self-produced candidates", and not only base our recruitment on candidates from the international market. Whenever there is a male contact person in the announcement, add also a female contact person echo could invite female PhD students to present at bedkom-like events to all student to role model for female students that it's a possible and exciting career path.	Leadership Inge, Karoline echo Eirik	
2. Career planning and qualifications for promotion	Follow the measures for career development and promotion qualification in the faculty's Handbook for gender balance. • encouragement and support in writing applications for professor promotion • employee interviews with concrete, (binding) career planning • support (encouragement, shielding and practical help) when writing applications for research funding.	Leadership Inge Inge, Stefanie	Initiated Ongoing
3. Mentors	• Mentors for everyone (both men and women) in entry-level positions, as well as for postdoctoral and PhD positions will continue. Women in early-stage career positions will also be given a mentor. Quote Torstein: "Having a good mentor who really cares about your career can be absolutely crucial" • Clear mentor mandate and follow-up, topic for appraisal interview.	Inge / groups	Partly ongoing
4. Offer Internships to strong female students	This is an expensive measure, but it can potentially have a good effect. Can be carried out with the proviso that we are granted Equality Funds for 4-6 Vit.ass 20% part-time positions per semester offered to good female students. The idea is that vit.ass will work on support tasks within research together with one or more researchers in the group. The idea is that in this way we can increase the chances that more female students will choose to apply for a research position later - because they enjoyed research work and because they (perhaps) showed talent in that direction. This measure is introduced with the proviso that the students support it. This will be taken up with echo, the student committee that represents all our students.		Not yet started
5. Strive for gender balance in leadership roles at the department	Head of department Deputy head Head of teaching Head of research training/PhD program Heads of program committees Group contacts Center heads Project heads WP leaders		
6 In general have a clear and conscious attitude when distributing tasks and resources between women and men	• Examples: ⇒ Assessment committees PhD: female opponent, not committee leader/ administrator ⇒ Assessment committees, positions: ensure that women do not assume the majority of "secretary responsibility." • Be aware of which tasks are meritorious and which are not - make sure that they are distributed fairly.		

D. Using female role models to inspire young women to choose a career in computer science			
Measures	Main activities	Responsible and timeline	Status
1.Role models on the wall	• In each corridor/per research group, a "wall of fame" with photos of all those who defended their dissertation from and including 2020.		Not yet started

	• Posters with famous women and men (balanced) in computer science, ex. Ada Lovelace, Alan Turing, including more contemporary men and women. • The echo reading room – set up a series of portraits of all echo leaders from when echo was established (2019?)		
2. Correcting biases in symbol usage	• Illustrative images on the web, images in the hallways, themes in exam papers, etc. • Ensure diversity in web illustrations.		Not yet started
3. Strive for gender balance among speakers where we ourselves are the organizers	For example, the department seminars, our conferences, department gatherings, invited speakers in other forums or events.	Organizers	Ongoing
4. Female TAs and group leaders	Gender balance for TAs on the major courses. Particularly good female TA on INF100, which is the first course for all our students. Encourage bright women students to apply for group leader positions including for more advanced courses.	Lecturers	Partly ongoing
5. Programming events	Encourage female students/pupils to participate. Organize hackathons with less focus on competition and more emphasis on collaborative activities– should be reflected in event announcements. Direct challenges towards practical cases with societal impact.	Organizers	
6. Use of alumni	Create more web articles about the female candidates who have entered the workforce in recent years - we know many well and it should be easy to get in contact with good candidates.		Not yet started

E. Students - recruit and keep female students			
Measures	Main activities	Responsible and timeline	Status
1. Mapping	Meeting with echo: • How do the students feel that the gender imbalance affects them on a daily basis? • Do the students have suggestions for points of improvement/measures? • Suggestions for how we can make our study programs more attractive for women/girls?		
2. Targeted recruitment work	Campaigns/recruitment initiatives that are aimed specifically at girls. Organize a Girl's day for high school students.		
3. Prevent dropouts among female students	• Support Gnist's work • Continued support for monthly girls' lunch • Employ female group leaders • Be conscious when designing cases in exam papers • Consider testing out voluntary girls only group in introductory courses		Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
4. Profiling strategies	• Profile informatics as an area with the opportunity to take great social responsibility • Profile ground-breaking fundamental aspects		

F. Equality at a multicultural workplace			
Measures	Main activities	Responsible and timeline	Status

1.Information on labor rights and duties	• HR and study directed information meetings for PhD students to follow up after on-boarding. • Inform about role of labor union and their role in supporting staff interests including salary negotiations. • Inform that department leadership and management may be consulted about Norwegian culture, etc.	Leadership, HR, groups?	
2.Special follow-up of employees from outside Europe and North America	Assign buddy for every new staff member, see section B, point 3.	Groups, supported by admin	
3. Onboarding	• At the UiB level (Introduction course, international center and the newsletter for internationals • At the department level (Pre-boarding, onboarding meetings with admin, follow-up meeting for PhDs, newcomers club the first year of employment) • More systematic and generic onboarding at the group level? Start with sharing existing group internal routines in the group contact meeting aiming to inspiring each other.	Karoline, Linda, Eirik Inge, Linda, group contacts	Ongoing Ongoing