

# **The Norwegian Association of Researchers:**

## **Vision and values**

**The vision and values of the Norwegian Association of Researchers (NAR) is an overarching document that describes who we are, what we stand for and the goals we strive to attain.**

---

**Adopted by the Norwegian Association of Researchers' Congress,  
21–22 October 2021**

## **Our Purpose and Core Value**

NAR is a politically independent trade union for employees and students in the research and knowledge sector, which includes universities, university colleges, research institutes, hospitals, public administration, museums, archives and libraries, and industry.

NAR shall improve the pay and working conditions in the research and knowledge sector and safeguard the members' financial and professional interests. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through the work of promoting research, education, gender equality and a decent working life is part of NAR's core activity. NAR shall be an environmentally conscious organization that works to reduce the climate footprint in a fair way.

The association's members and representatives are absolutely central to the solution of tasks at the institutions and NAR is a responsible party in the work of creating good solutions for the benefit of the companies and to strengthen the Norwegian welfare society.

NAR shall act accountably, responsibly, and clearly in all situations.

## **Academic Freedom and Professional Judgement**

Academic freedom is the basis for all research and development work (R&D). Intellectual freedom is a fundamental prerequisite for all seekers of the truth and for all artistic creation. Research institutions must ensure the researcher's freedom in the choice of topic, methodology, partners, execution of the research and publication of results.

## **Salaries and Working Conditions**

Knowledge workers in the research and knowledge sector are an institution's most important asset. In order to recruit and retain skilled employees, institutions must stand out as attractive workplaces that reflect the diversity of society and have competitive conditions. This means salaries in line with comparable positions elsewhere in society, and adequate time and resources to perform one's tasks. Knowledge workers must be ensured secure employment conditions.

Permanent employment and job security are of great importance, both for the individual, for the professional environment, and for the working environment at the institutions. For academic staff, a permanent position contributes to ensuring academic freedom, a long-term perspective and society's confidence that research is conducted in a critical and independent manner. There must be no discrimination on any basis, and good recruitment processes must be facilitated that ensure gender balance in all job groups.

Respect for the individual's fundamental rights and the democratic ground rules are prerequisites for finding good solutions and creating a good society. Workplaces with well-functioning participation schemes for employees are an important part of this. Openness and transparency in decision-making processes ensure the possibility of participation and prevent external considerations from being taken into account.

The Norwegian model of tripartite cooperation between the government, unions and employers' organisations constitutes the foundation of the Norwegian welfare state. The union representatives are the link between employees and the employer and contribute to the best possible solutions for employees and the company. Co-determination and participation for employees and union representatives results in better and more productive enterprises. This model is the basis for the development of Norwegian welfare and working life and must be retained, strengthened, and further developed.

Collective agreements ensure collective salary negotiations and the development of salaries and working conditions. The union's main instrument for ensuring salary development and good working conditions for its members is the development and establishment of collective agreements centrally and locally. Opportunities for competence development, professional renewal and good career paths are a prerequisite for recruiting and maintaining good professional environments.

## Research and development (R&D)

Knowledge and know-how are the basis of democracy and the welfare and prosperity we enjoy today. National and global challenges such as sustainable economic development, environment, energy, democracy, migration, poverty, food production and health, require a stronger focus on knowledge development. Investment in knowledge, research and innovation is a necessary tool for solving social challenges, maintaining competitiveness, developing our welfare society, and ensuring that our individual resources and potential can be realised.

To meet and create a future we do not yet know and to answer questions we do not yet have, research efforts need to be strengthened and independent, creative, and innovative research facilitated. A national research policy must therefore provide room for transparency and long-term competence building in the research and knowledge sector. A proactive knowledge policy is a good investment for Norway and a significant contribution to creating new and knowledge-based jobs.

Knowledge workers must have good framework conditions for professional development. This entails uninterrupted time for R&D in a predictable system, working capital and access to modern research infrastructure, as well as competent managers and support staff.

## Education policy and knowledge management

Education and competence are important for our self-understanding and culture. A high level of education in the population is important for economic growth and makes the workforce more productive and adaptable.

Free and independent institutions in the research and knowledge sector are long-term and professionally independent managers of knowledge. The population's confidence in the production of knowledge is dependent on how open institutions are to debate, criticism and opinion. High ethical standards should be reflected in the work. Academic freedom is not only the best guarantee for free and independent research but also a role model in the development of democratic ideals. The institutions in the research and knowledge sector have a responsibility to also administer narrow disciplines and areas of knowledge. Norway needs a knowledge contingency for subject or topic areas we do not currently see the benefit of, because such knowledge will often be too time-consuming or difficult to acquire on the day the need arises.

Political authorities have overall responsibility for the institutions within the research and knowledge sector. These institutions are important bearers of culture, have academic and artistic freedom and are academically independent. The role of the State is to be a guarantor for the institutions' independence and academic freedom. This presupposes that the institutions have a funding and a governance scheme that ensures autonomy from the owner. Higher education should be based on research and development, and students given the opportunity to gain research experience throughout their education.

Equal access to education is a fundamental principle in Norwegian higher education. It presupposes free higher education and government student support that makes it possible to be a full-time student. Equal right to education and the principle of free higher education ensures a diverse, equal, and adaptable workforce with the right skills.

## Policy instruments

NAR must be organized in an appropriate manner, with the right expertise at all levels and with good arenas for collaboration in the association. NAR emphasizes being a transparent organization that promotes a culture of openness between all parts of the association. NAR shall have a conscious rhetoric in matters of salary, education policy and research policy that embraces the diversity among our members.