

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.

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16–17 October 2018**

The Norwegian Association of Researchers (NAR)

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

NAR members are knowledge workers with high levels of expertise that are essential for services and output in the research and knowledge sector. Institutions in the research and knowledge sector constitute key societal institutions, and the employees must be offered working conditions that promote academic integrity, academic freedom and generally accepted research ethics. The union's members and local representatives have a key role in the development of institutions, and NAR is therefore a natural part of efforts to create better institutions.

NAR protects members' interests and is a service organisation for members and union representatives. The union's policies focus on good, competitive wages and working conditions. As a participant in influencing academic policy, NAR aims to promote the best possible framework conditions and working conditions for institutions and knowledge workers in the sector. As a service organisation, the union provides assistance related to questions about employment, arranges courses and seminars, and offers favourable membership benefits.

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

Academic Freedom

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. This also includes free choice of digital solutions that are intended to support the R&D activity.

Wages 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 with competitive terms. This means salaries in line with comparable positions elsewhere in society, 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 academic quality 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.

The Norwegian model of tripartite cooperation between the government, unions and employers' organisations constitutes the foundation of the Norwegian welfare state. 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 wage settlements and the development of wages 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. Employment structures must encourage competence-building and professional development.

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, migration, poverty, food production and health, require a stronger focus on knowledge development. Research and innovation play a crucial role in the development of good, efficient public services and as a basis for administration, policy decisions, value creation and societal development. Investment in knowledge, research and innovation is an effective instrument 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. Research in Norway must have a scope and quality that give us access to international research environments, so that new technology and knowledge can be developed and exchanged. A proactive knowledge policy is a good investment for Norway and a significant contribution to creating new and knowledge-based jobs.

There must be good frameworks in place for the professional development of knowledge workers. 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 expertise make a valuable contribution to our understanding of ourselves, to our culture and to general knowledge. A highly educated population is important for economic growth, while also making the workforce more productive and adaptable.

NAR aims to ensure free and independent institutions in the research and knowledge sector, which have a long-term perspective and are academically independent stewards 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. Universities and colleges are key stewards of knowledge and bearers of culture. This also involves stewardship of narrow disciplines and knowledge areas. Norway as a society needs to have knowledge in disciplines or subject areas where we currently do not fully understand the benefits; such knowledge will often be too time-consuming or difficult to acquire when the need finally arises.

Political authorities have overall responsibility for the institutions within the research and knowledge sector. These institutions are important bearers of culture with academic and artistic freedom, and they 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 so that students gain research experience throughout their education.

Equal access to education is a fundamental principle in Norwegian higher education. This ensures an adaptable workforce with the right skills. Equal access to education presupposes free higher education and a public financial support system to make it possible to be a full-time student.

Policy Instruments

NAR aims to be a powerful union with a strong network of alliance partners. We will seek to rally support for our positions with clear and reasoned argumentation, presented through the media and by direct contact with political authorities and decision-makers at central and local levels. Both NAR's local and central levels will help Norway reach the UN's sustainable development goals.

If NAR is to succeed in this work, the union must be organised in an appropriate manner, with the right expertise at all levels and with good collaboration between the various levels in the organisation. NAR aims to develop a transparent organization, promoting a culture of openness between all parts of the association. Development and training in the use of digital platforms is a means to strengthen the information, communication and interaction between all employees and officers of NAR.