

# **Forskerforbundet: Work program 2025–2027**

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Adopted by the Forskerforbundet Congress, 19–20 November 2024

**Contents:**

**A future-oriented knowledge policy..... 3**

Priority 2025–2027 ..... 3

Increased research efforts..... 3

International cooperation ..... 4

Academic freedom ..... 4

Education quality..... 4

**An attractive working life for knowledge workers ..... 5**

Priority 2025–2027 ..... 5

Wages..... 5

Working hours ..... 5

Temporary employment..... 5

Skills development and career development ..... 6

Working environment ..... 6

**Democracy and co-determination..... 7**

Priority 2025–2027 ..... 7

Strengthened co-determination and participation..... 7

Communication climate ..... 7

Increased unionization rate ..... 7

Organizational development..... 8

Alliances and international cooperation ..... 8

The work program sets out the overall goals and priorities for Forskerforbundet – the Norwegian Association of Researchers (NAR) – for the period 2025–2027.

## **Forskerforbundet will work to ensure**

- framework conditions that safeguard the breadth of research, ensure academic freedom, research-based higher education and knowledge-based public administration and contribute to long-term thinking, stability and quality in the entire knowledge sector.
- high appreciation of knowledge workers by strengthening our members' pay and working conditions.
- strengthening and further developing workplace democracy and co-determination throughout the knowledge sector.

## **A future-oriented knowledge policy**

The goal of Forskerforbundet is a democratic and sustainable welfare society, where research and knowledge are central building blocks in social development. Knowledge lays the foundation for a stable and democratic society. Research-based knowledge is crucial for the development of welfare services, good public administration and a future-oriented business sector. Investing in research is also an investment in social preparedness. Educational institutions and cultural institutions such as museums and libraries are important educational arenas that contribute to active and critically thinking citizens. It is therefore a goal to increase understanding of the importance of research, and to ensure good conditions for higher education, research and dissemination.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 highlight the need for holistic thinking and action in the face of societal challenges globally, nationally and locally. Researchers and knowledge workers must therefore contribute knowledge to societal development in line with the carrying capacity of nature and the earth. Researchers and knowledge workers have a particular responsibility to contribute to an enlightened public conversation by questioning established truths.

### **Priority 2025–2027**

*Forskerforbundet will work to ensure framework conditions that ensure breadth of research, ensure academic freedom, research-based higher education and knowledge-based public administration and contribute to long-term thinking, stability and quality in the entire knowledge sector.*

### **Increased research efforts**

Stable and long-term framework conditions for research and development work are a necessary condition for research and innovation capacity. Forskerforbundet will work to strengthen national research efforts and ensure a good balance between basic research and applied research. Increased research efforts and improved framework conditions shall encompass the entire research-performing sector. Digital solutions and new technology intervene in and change both the work tasks and the way knowledge workers work. In order to benefit from the new opportunities this opens up, businesses must be provided with resources for infrastructure, user-driven service development and training in new technology.

## **International cooperation**

International knowledge cooperation is absolutely central to research and higher education. Internationalization has been crucial for building leading knowledge environments and solving global challenges. Forskerforbundet works for a strengthened international educational and research collaboration.

## **Academic freedom**

The knowledge sector should be a sector where opinions are exchanged within the framework of a good and open climate for expression. Trust in research depends on researchers having academic freedom, and on research results being continuously subject to critical scrutiny by other researchers. In an increasing number of countries, research is considered so threatening that academic freedom is being restricted, and individual researchers feel gagged or persecuted. In Norway too, there are tendencies and trends that are putting academic freedom in research and higher education under pressure. Forskerforbundet works to ensure academic freedom in research and higher education, and believes that academic freedom must be enshrined in the constitution. Academic freedom, research quality and employees' copyrights must be safeguarded in the transition to open science.

## **Education quality**

Research-based teaching, academic breadth and long-term and stable funding are crucial for the quality of higher education. Forskerforbundet will work for management systems and funding schemes that take care of all these aspects. An increasingly diverse student population as well as demands and expectations for more flexible education, require a strong focus on both infrastructure and human resources. The institutions' administration has a central role in facilitating students and academic activity. Forskerforbundet will work to strengthen and further develop professional academic support. The institutions must be provided with sufficient resources so that employees can continuously develop high-quality teaching.

Equal access to education must remain a fundamental principle in Norwegian higher education. Forskerforbundet will work towards a system of student financing that makes it possible for students to study full-time, and that gives those who complete higher education the right to write off part of their student loans.

# **An attractive working life for knowledge workers**

The goal of Forskerforbundet is a knowledge sector with pay and working conditions that recruit, develop and retain qualified and motivated knowledge workers in competition with alternative career opportunities. The pay conditions should both reflect the social significance of the tasks and ensure that education, competence, responsibility, effort and results pay off.

It is a goal to ensure professional development, good job structures and clear career paths throughout the knowledge sector. Research expertise must also be valued in businesses outside academia.

All employees must be ensured good and safe working conditions and a good physical and mental working environment. A key goal is to reduce the proportion of temporary employees in the knowledge sector to a minimum. It is also a goal to reduce the involuntary additional work that employees in the sector report. Employees in the knowledge sector must be able to complete their work tasks within normal working hours, so that it is possible to balance work and leisure in all phases of life.

## **Priority 2025–2027**

*Forskerforbundet shall work for high valuation of knowledge workers by strengthening our members' pay and working conditions.*

## **Wages**

Central and local collective wage settlements are Forskerforbundet's most important tool in the wage fight. Forskerforbundet will work systematically and purposefully for the best possible salary and working conditions and good salary development for our members. This includes, among other things, further development of statistics and relevant documentation as a basis for improving the salary level and salary development of our members. Forskerforbundet works to ensure that publicly employed knowledge workers are guaranteed salary development on a par with other highly educated people. Employees in private enterprises should be allowed to share in the economic profits of the enterprises. The conditions for PhD candidates and postdoctoral fellows should be so good that these positions become attractive.

## **Working hours**

Forskerforbundet works for an everyday working life for members where there is a good match between tasks and working hours. In research-performing enterprises, employees must be ensured continuous time for research and development work. Employers must take responsibility for the necessary overview of the total workload. Employees must be ensured compensation for imposed extra work. The member groups that have a working day governed by work plans must have realistic work plans so that assigned tasks can be carried out within normal working hours.

## **Temporary employment**

Forskerforbundet will continue to survey the extent of temporary employment, and exert pressure on authorities and employers to reduce the proportion. Researchers who mainly obtain their own funding have the right to the same security of employment as other employees. Insecurity related to externally funded activities must be borne by the institutions, not the individual employee. Forskerforbundet will work on a broad front to ensure that temporary employment in the knowledge sector is at least reduced to the level in working life in general, and work for a change in attitude in companies with a high level of temporary

employment, so that employers at all levels follow the intentions of the legislation. Forskerforbundet is sceptical of the tenure-track position and has more faith in the announcement of permanent scientific positions.

## **Skills development and career development**

A high rate of change, new technology and constant changes in working life increase the need for continuous competence development. Forskerforbundet's members work in knowledge-intensive businesses, where it is crucial that the employees have access to skills development throughout their working lives. The employees' interests and co-determination must be safeguarded in digitalization processes and when introducing artificial intelligence. Forskerforbundet will work for good systems for continuing and further education and rewards for skills development both in the form of salary and career opportunities.

Job structures and opportunities for career development should be established based on competence and known criteria for promotion in all sectors.

## **Working environment**

Forskerforbundet works for an inclusive working environment with respect for equality and diversity. Discrimination, unequal treatment and all forms of harassment must be prevented. It is important that enterprises in the knowledge sector establish strategies for gender balance in all positions, and for recruiting ethnic minorities and people with reduced functional levels.

To ensure a good working environment and good work performance, it is necessary to have a functional workplace design that is adapted to the work tasks and the needs of the individual employee. Employees must be ensured co-determination in the processes in order to obtain good and sustainable solutions in connection with new buildings, the introduction of new infrastructure and workplace design.

## **Democracy and co-determination**

The goal of Forskerforbundet is a democratic working life with binding party cooperation and a high proportion of union members participating in decision-making processes at their own workplace. The goal is to strengthen real co-determination, which is challenged by constant restructuring, efficiency requirements and governance and management models that leave neither time nor space for proper involvement of the union representatives. Co-determination contributes to better solutions for the employees and the businesses. Local union representatives in the workplaces are a prerequisite for the Norwegian model of co-determination and party cooperation to function in practice.

In order to secure and maintain the legitimacy of the Norwegian model, it is a goal to maintain and increase the degree of trade union organization in Norwegian working life.

The work for a decent and democratic working life must extend beyond national borders. Globalization binds working life together across countries. It is a goal to strengthen international trade union work to safeguard fundamental workers' rights and promote democratic development globally.

### **Priority 2025–2027**

*Forskerforbundet shall work to strengthen and further develop workplace democracy and co-determination throughout the knowledge sector.*

## **Strengthened co-determination and participation**

Forskerforbundet works to safeguard and strengthen co-determination. Co-determination according to the contractual framework must be evaluated and further developed at all levels. Forskerforbundet must work to ensure good framework conditions for union representatives to be able to carry out their duties. There is a need for more trust-based management of the knowledge sector with real co-determination and participation, less reporting and increased professional scope for action. Trust-based management and organization require cooperation between the parties with active and good involvement of union representatives. Forskerforbundet will ensure that its members have influence over their own tasks and everyday working life. At the universities and colleges, collegial bodies must be established or maintained at all levels, and the institutions themselves must be able to decide whether academic leaders are to be elected or employed.

## **Communication climate**

Forskerforbundet will work for a good communication climate at each individual workplace in the entire knowledge sector. Employees' freedom of expression must be ensured, not only through legislation, but also through training and active cooperation between union representatives and management.

## **Increased unionization rate**

The Norwegian model must be safeguarded and further developed through a high unionization rate and a competent apparatus of union representatives. This means that Forskerforbundet must strengthen its recruitment of new members. Extra effort is required to recruit and safeguard employees with a foreign background. Forskerforbundet must contribute to increasing this group's knowledge of Norwegian working life, the Norwegian working life model and their own employee rights.

## **Organizational development**

In order for Forskerforbundet to be an effective and impactful organization, the central levels, local branches, professional networks and student association must all work towards the same goals, and all levels must cooperate closely to promote members' interests. Forskerforbundet will work for increased recognition of the role of union representatives and facilitate good recruitment for the position. Support and training for local union representatives must be of high quality and cover all member groups and tasks.

## **Alliances and international cooperation**

Political advocacy work will be strengthened through alliance building and cooperation with other actors. A decent working life is one of the UN's sustainability goals, and implies that employee rights must be secured and safeguarded both nationally and internationally. Through cooperation in Unio and cooperation with Nordic sister organizations and Education International, Forskerforbundet will actively work for a decent working life, equality and diversity, knowledge-based sustainable social development and social security.